

Hi I'm Fran Hardy & I live in Murwillumbah and I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak up for the endangered koalas of the Tweed. My hope is that the diligent work ecologists, community groups and activists perform to protect our koalas is not in vain. I have tried to educate myself about the Kings Forest Residential Community Development because such a large development on very crucial and sensitive wildlife habitat requires the communities' caring scrutiny. As I have already heard so many speakers express the same hopes and concerns as mine & I can only reinforce the imperative nature of giving Tweed koalas the best chance of survival through a very stringent legally binding Koala Plan of Management.

Firstly, regarding the infrastructure of roadways, being one of the most dangerous aspects of all development for koalas, the KPOM recommends placing barrier fencing along pre-existing haulage roads that run through the Environmental Protection Zones. Fencing may help prevent koala road death but in doing so a new problem arises, where fencing impedes the free movement of koalas and other fauna, capturing animals within smaller patches of the Environmental Protection Zones. It appears the fencing of roadways would defeat the purpose of fully accessible EPZs. I know fauna underpasses are a proven way of promoting free movement of wildlife and if engineered into roadways before any road haulage gets started this could counter the issue of fencing barriers. As roadway barriers could be in place for long periods, koalas could be kept apart breaking up the colony into smaller groups. Surely underpasses engineered and in place before any construction certificate is given must be agreed upon by the Proponent for the KPOM to have integrity.

Secondly the KPOM states permanent koala fencing will surround the golf course, again cutting off the free movement of koalas. There are 7.86 HA of food trees located within the golf course itself and fencing would stop koalas accessing this food and lessen the value of the golf course acting as an "ecological buffer". There appears a more logical and appropriate place for high protective fencing and that would be around the residential precincts to prevent domestic animals acting as predators on protected wildlife.

Lastly, to date the Proponent of this 856 HA Kings Forest Residential Development has still neglected to establish where the 27 HA of koala food tree planting OFFSETs will go and how the stages of planting will be progressed. The offsets must be in a fully koala accessible locations and be planted out in a timely manner that will provide food for an expanding colony. The details of the offset must be locked in legally. I would hope the Proponent cannot progress any construction works until this is a legally binding detailed agreement.

I believe it is these three points that will determine the ecological success or failure of the Kings Forest project. The endangered Tweed koalas have had so many set backs by fire road deaths chlamydia dog attacks and loss of habitat! Lets not make it any tougher for them. When residential development goes into an ecologically sensitive area it is imperative to get every step of the way, right.

