

12th March 2019.

Thank you to Mr Ross Carter, Ms Catherine Hird and Professor Richard McKay for coming to listen to the communities views.

This is in fact the fifth time we have been asked for views since 2009 and the answer is the same EVERY SINGLE TIME. If you want to develop Kings Forest home to the Tweed Coasts largest and most vital Koala colonies do so in a Koala friendly way. At no point are we going to say “ don’t worry about our Koalas , we don’t care about them anyway” no matter how many times we are asked.

In fact this development received over 3000 submissions in 2011. 1500 in 2014 and 2007 written submissions in 2017.

It is not like the existence of vital Koala colonies was hidden from the developers, in the Sydney Morning Herald reported on the 8th November in 2004, Mr Reg Van Rij saying that “ it could all turn out to be a very expensive Koala Park” . The community has been very generous and fair, we haven’t dressed up in Koala suits and harassed politicians or laid down in front of bulldozers. We have formed groups like Team Koala to consult experts and work out a way to have both. We have done the right thing and objected well before any bulldozers arrived.

In 2010 we finally had an agreement in the Concept Plan, it sounded good, general but vague. It was to be developed in a way it would have the least impact and give our Koalas some hope of surviving. With project approvals in 2011 and 2011 and 2014 and 2017 and 2018 none have aligned or complied with the Concept plan.

The developer took out full page ads promising to increase Cudgen Nature Reserve by 40% in 2011 in an effort to have community back a Koala friendly development.

So what is a koala friendly development ?

1. Golf Course - The draft revised KPOM (October 2018) proposes to install permanent fauna exclusion fencing on the inside of the ecological buffer in the area of the proposed Golf Course (figure 28 & 40b) . This is inconsistent with the ecological buffer requirements of the Kings Forest Major Projects SEPP and the Concept Plan (2010) which allowed koalas using the proposed golf course which would act as a buffer.
2. Fencing and Underpasses – Existing project condition 46 requires fauna exclusion fencing and underpasses for roads through environmental areas to be in place PRIOR to bulk earthworks. This is to allow Koala and other wildlife movement across roads during construction and in the long term. The proposed modification 46 allows the underpasses to be delayed until roadworks. If fencing was installed either side of the roads without underpasses, koalas and other wildlife would be prevented from moving between environmental areas – perhaps for decades. Condition 46 – “fauna underpasses MUST be constructed in the locations identified in the updated KPOM approved by the Secretary”.
3. Planting of 27 hectares relates to 45a 2 part B.
The 27 hectares NEEDS TO BE LOCKED IN BEFORE THE CONSTRUCTION CERTIFICATE.
Consultation between Tweed Shire Council and the O.E.H to secure a location of the 27 hectares needs to happen as soon as possible. DP and E proposed to allow approval of details of an alternative offset site to be provided 6 months after the Construction

Certificate for clearing or bulk earthworks. This is a serious concern that it will take longer than 6 months to secure an alternative site, potentially allowing the proponent to carry out clearing without certainty about delivery of the required offset. It is imperative that this approval be required BEFORE the Construction Certificate.

Please understand that our Koalas have not become less threatened or less valuable, they have actually had their protection increased, they have now been declared as ENDANGERED by the Scientific Committee of NSW.

So we say once again, thank you for asking. We have not changed. We want the best outcome possible for our Tweed Coast Koalas. The conditions previously agreed on when consent was granted in 2010 are the minimum standards.

Every single political party is running on Koala protection in the upcoming State Election for the Tweed. That should give you some idea of their importance to ordinary people. As an ordinary school teacher and an Australia Day Award recipient for Team Koala for Koala protection, all I can do is appeal to you, sitting on this committee to take the task of relaying the communities views very seriously, as I am sure you will.

Thank you for your time

Jenny Hayes
President, Team Koala