



**Australian
Koala
Foundation**

ACN 010 922 102

MEDIA RELEASE

November 28 2022

Australian Koala Foundation announces first 'Koala Kiss Site': A first-of-its kind Human Plan of Management will see Koala numbers grow over the next 50 years

The nation's first 'Koala Kiss Site', which is part of the larger Koala Kiss Project has been announced by the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) today, to ensure abundant Koala populations in 50 years.

AKF Chair Deborah Tabart OAM said they had selected the Gwydir Shire in NSW because it contained secure habitat with the ability to have certain points of the landscape connected, creating the first 'Koala Kiss Site'.

"We see the Gwydir Shire as the perfect pilot project for our long-term vision for the Koalas' recovery and for the first-of-its-kind *Human Plan of Management*," Ms Tabart, also known as the *Koala Woman*, said.

"There are small discrete populations where Koalas are doing well in this area, and if we reduce the threats there should be healthy Koala populations there in 50 years."

The Koala Kiss Project aims to link fragmented Koala habitats and identify strategic and/or regrowth opportunities. With the ultimate vision of creating the 'Koala Kamino' - approximately 2,543kms of prime koala habitat from Cairns to Melbourne, that can be created into an uninterrupted conservation corridor by connecting key 'kiss points'.

This is possible with the use of the AKF's scientific, first-of-its-kind Koala Habitat Atlas, which maps the entire geographic habitat of the Koala across 1.5 million square kilometres.

Rather than a Koala Plan of Management, AKF will demonstrate in the Gwydir Shire how a *Human Plan of Management*, with Koalas as a flagship can create sustainable communities, despite environmental and human threats.

"We estimate there are less than 1000 Koalas in the Parkes electorate which includes Gunnedah, Inverell, Moree and Gwydir Shire, but, we believe, with careful management their populations can become robust and sustainable into the future. I have seen so many Koala Plans of Management, but what we need is a *Human Plan of Management* – manage human development and we will have Koalas," Ms Tabart said.

"It is time for a new way of thinking about Koala conservation and most importantly to not rely on Governments, of all levels, coming and going and changing their laws to allow destruction of Koala habitat."

"Given 80% of Australia's Koalas live on private land, it is up to us; those that own that land to become stewards of the biodiversity that is on our properties."

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“It should be simple and I think it could be. That is why the Koala Kiss Project was born. I know it will thrive because it relies on common sense and I truly have faith in us, the people to do the right thing.”

“It is time to write *Human Plans of Management* that incorporate a holistic approach to each and every landscape with complex and often conflicting priorities.”

The AKF will hold a [workshop in Warialda](#) with key stakeholders and community in February 2023 to discuss how a *Human Plan of Management* can help transform long-term viability of Koalas in the region.

“This workshop will not just be lamenting the loss of Koalas but inspiring abundance. We can do it if we all work together. We are welcoming everyone from all walks of life to join us at this two-day workshop in Warialda - to think through the complexities and also the excitement of thinking Koalas will be in the Gwydir Shire landscape in 2075,” said Ms Tabart.

“AKF is all about recovery of the species – with the Federal Government officially listing the Koala as Endangered in parts of Australia earlier this year, a Koala Recovery Plan and EPBC Act waiting to be re-written, we’re not sitting idle - it’s clear we must take matters into our own hands and AKF does not need permission from the government to make this vision possible!

“Imagine if we achieve contiguous habitat across the entire stretch of the Koala range, then all creatures great and small could traverse through the bush unthreatened – that is the ultimate goal.”

To find out more about this new vision for the koala visit savethekoala.com/our-work/kiss

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