



**Gladys Berejiklian**

Premier of NSW

**Gabrielle Upton**

Minister for the Environment

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **KOALA STRATEGY WILL SAVE AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL TREASURE**

Premier Gladys Berejiklian has today unveiled an unprecedented State strategy to protect Australia's iconic koala, including a special new koala hospital and major new reserves for the much-loved marsupial.

The NSW Government's Koala Strategy – the biggest commitment by any state government to secure koalas in the wild – will provide more natural habitat for koalas, tackle diseases, improve research and fix roadkill hotspots.

“Koalas are a national treasure. This strategy will ensure there are far more of them in the wild,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“This unprecedented action is the first part of a long-term investment by the NSW Liberal and Nationals Government that will guarantee koalas have a very bright future in this State.”

The centerpiece of the NSW Koala Strategy is setting aside large swathes of land where koalas can thrive and new habitats can be created.

“It is absolutely vital that we protect land where koalas currently live - and secure land where new koala colonies may exist in the future,” said Environment Minister Gabrielle Upton.

“Initially, 24,538 hectares of State forest will be set aside for koalas – with more to come.

“This includes 4,096 hectares of state forest with koala habitat on the Mid-North Coast that will be transferred to the national parks estate.

“A further 20,442 hectares of state forest with koala habitat will be set aside and managed as koala reserves. This includes state forests on the Far North Coast and in the Upper Hunter, Central Coast, Hawkesbury and Southern Highlands.”

The NSW Government will commit \$45 million for this strategy. This includes funding for further acquisitions of land that will be set aside for koala habitat.

In Port Stephens there will be a new \$3 million koala hospital and tourism centre, providing specialist care for sick and injured koalas. Ultimately, it is envisaged that NSW will have a network of koala and wildlife hospitals.

On top of this there will be \$4.5 million to boost koala rehabilitation across the State and deliver specialist training for veterinary surgeons and nurses. This will be done with help from experts at Taronga Zoo and tertiary institutions.

The NSW Government will also set up an injured koala hotline and fund new research into diseases affecting the marsupials. This includes trialing a chlamydia vaccine to decrease the incidence of the disease and increase healthy koala populations.

Large numbers of koalas are killed each year while crossing roads. The NSW Government will spend \$3.3 million fixing roadkill hotspots, including Picton Road in Wollondilly where new fences will be built to prevent koalas getting on the road.

This will complement two existing wildlife underpasses that enable koalas to cross the road under safely.

The NSW Government will also draw up plans to reduce koala roadkill on Appin Road, Campbelltown.

Other measures in the NSW Koala Strategy include:

- \$8.9 million to improve our knowledge of koalas starting with the development of a statewide koala habitat database. This includes \$2 million to research impacts of natural hazards and weather events on koalas.
- \$5 million for community initiatives to boost koala numbers, including planting new trees, provide water sources, pilot koala conservation areas on private land and eradicate weeds in existing koala habitats.
- Rolling out a citizen scientist program that will allow local communities to identify and record koala sightings across the State.
- The NSW Government will work in partnership with Taronga Zoo and tertiary institutions to increase wildlife care training for veterinarians and veterinary nurses.

The NSW Koala Strategy is the first phase of the NSW Government's response to an independent review into the decline of koala populations in key areas of NSW by the State's Chief Scientist and Engineer.

For more information about the NSW Koala Strategy, including a list of local projects, please visit: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/koalas](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/koalas).

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