

## About the project

**The Southern Highlands is home to over 3,000 koalas. This is the largest population of koalas in southern NSW and around 10% of the total number of koalas estimated to be living in the wild in NSW.**

Prior to the establishment of the Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project in 2014 very little was known about koalas in the region. In fact, most people in the community weren't even aware koalas lived in the Highlands.

With ongoing research and the assistance of our wonderful community, we now understand a great deal more about our koalas, particularly in regards to their tree preferences and habitat.

Our focus has now turned to the urgent task of safeguarding their habitat, with the help of the NSW Government's Saving Our Species program. Our ultimate goal is to have koalas surviving and thriving in the Southern Highlands for the next 100 years.



Koalas have been spotted all over the Southern Highlands. This young koala was spotted in Mount Gibraltar Reserve in Bowral.

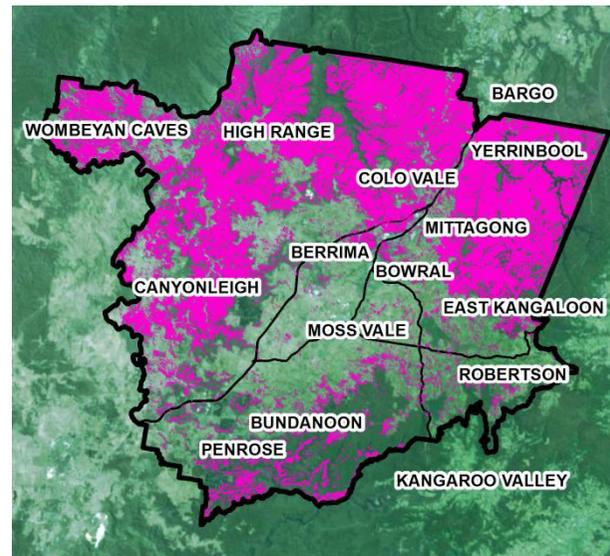
## Where are the Southern Highlands koalas?

Although the Southern Highlands is home to more than 3,000 koalas, spotting one is not as easy as you might think. This is because there is more than 177,000 hectares of native bushland in the shire (more than ten times the size of Royal National Park in Sydney). Over 60% of this bushland is mapped as koala habitat.

Nevertheless, there are locations in the Highlands where you are more likely to spot a koala. These locations include bushland on the fertile basalt & shale soils east of the Hume Highway (Yerrinbool, Mittagong, Kangaloon, Robertson, etc).

Koalas are also regularly spotted west of the Hume Highway, however the less fertile sandstone soils tend to support fewer koalas.

The map below shows the extent of predicted koala habitat in the Southern Highlands.



**Predicted koala habitat in the Southern Highlands**  
Total area of Wingecarribee LGA = 268,900 hectares  
Total area of predicted koala habitat = 113,600 hectares

## Koalas & the Southern Highlands

- The indigenous languages of the region are the basis for the word 'koala'. It has been written as guala (Gundungurra), kurrilwa or cullawine (Tharawal) and kula or coola (Dharug).
- The first recorded sighting of a koala by a European was in 1798 in Bargo, a town on the northern edge of the Southern Highlands.
- The region once had a thriving koala colony, with the town of Colo Vale translating as 'Valley of the Koala'.
- Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the famous royal figure assassinated in the prelude to WWI, spent much of his life travelling the world killing exotic animals. In the 1890s he made his way to the Southern Highlands where he boasted of shooting at least eight koalas in one day.
- Koala populations in NSW declined dramatically during the early 20th century due to drought, disease and a booming fur trade, virtually disappearing from the Southern Highlands, but today they appear to be making a comeback.



Local threatened species officer Lachlan Wilmott releasing a koala back into its home near Mittagong.

## How can you help koalas in the Southern Highlands?

Current analysis indicates that over 36,000 hectares, or 27 per cent of our Shire's koala habitat is located on private land. To ensure the long-term survival of our koalas we need to address a range of threats, including habitat loss, urbanisation, bushfire, climate change, disease and an escalating koala road-kill toll.

Below are a few things you can do to help save our koalas:

- **Turn your property into a koala haven**  
Plant eucalypt species preferred by our local koalas. Contact us for a species list.
- **Koala habitat conservation**  
Do you have koala habitat on your property? Get in touch to find out how we might be able to help you conserve it! Call 4868 0888
- **Join a local wildlife conservation program** such as Land for Wildlife or Habitat for Wildlife.
- **Maintain healthy bushland** around your home and plant a variety of native feed trees and shrubs.
- **Volunteer with a local Bushcare Group**  
Keep fit, expand your social network, and help improve your local environment.
- **Keep dogs secured** while you are not at home and preferably indoors at night. Notify Council if you see dogs roaming or un-leashed.
- **Erect koala friendly fences.** Open form fencing (wire, post and rail) or palings are best. Avoid barbs. Consider a fence bridge and fence capping if you have colorbond.
- **Drive slowly and cautiously** particularly at night.
- **If you see injured wildlife contact**  
☎ 0418 427 214 - Wildlife Rescue South Coast  
☎ 1300 094 737 - WIRES

## Our koalas need your help!

### Report koala sightings

- Call the Koala Hotline on 4868 0888
- Email: [citizen.science@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:citizen.science@wsc.nsw.gov.au)
- Send a message to the 'Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project' Facebook Page

*All community sightings are entered into BioNet - the official wildlife atlas of NSW.*

### Koala habitat conservation

Do you have koala habitat on your property? Get in touch to find out how we might be able to help you conserve it! Call 4868 0888

### Further information & updates

Visit our website & Facebook for further info:

[www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/koalas](http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/koalas)  
[facebook.com/SouthernHighlandsKoalas](https://facebook.com/SouthernHighlandsKoalas)

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SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS  
**KOALA**  
CONSERVATION PROJECT

