Essential habitat for koalas

Overview of state and federal regulations protecting habitat areas for koalas
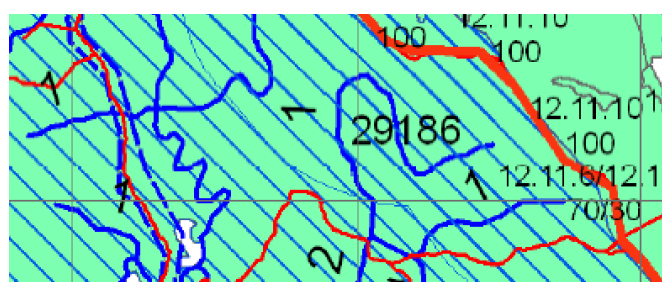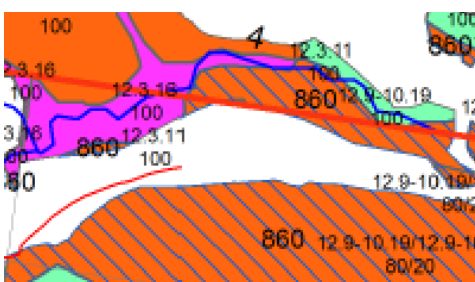
Version: 2019-3

> ➢ **Does your regulated vegetation management map show essential habitat for koalas?**
> ➢ **In south east Queensland, are you in a Koala District or Koala Assessable Development Area?**
> ➢ **Would new clearing activities have significant impact on koala habitat?**

Koalas are listed as a vulnerable species in Queensland under the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NCA)* and as vulnerable under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*.

Essential habitat for koalas:-

- Includes suitable habitat on a lot OR where koalas are known to occur within 1.1 kilometres from a lot on which there is regulated vegetation.
- Habitat is protected under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (VMA), which may impact on clearing activities.
- Can occur across Category A, B remnant vegetation or C regulated regrowth vegetation.
- Must contain three or more essential habitat factors. **Essential habitat for koalas factors** include: regional ecosystems (mandatory), vegetation communities, altitude and position in landscape (listed on page 2 and 3).
- Essential habitat mapping is shown as diagonal blue hatching on the regulated vegetation management map. The report tables that accompany the map will indicate the specific species.

What are the koala essential habitat 'factors'?

Label No on Map	Scientific Name	Common Name	NCA status	Altitude	Soils	Position in Landscape
860 (SEQ) 29186 (outside SEQ)	*Phascolarctos cinereus*	koala	vulnerable	Sea level to 1000m	None identified	Riparian areas, plains and hill/escarpment slopes

Vegetation Community	
SEQ	Open eucalypt forest and woodland that has: a) multiple strata layers containing Eucalyptus, Corymbia, Angophora, Lophostemon or Melaleuca trees that at 1.3 metres above the ground-have a diameter both greater and less than 30 centimetres; and b) at least 1 of the following species: *Eucalyptus tereticornis, E. fibrosa, E. propinqua; E. umbra, E. grandis, E. microcorys, E. tindaliae, E. resinifera, E. populnea, E. robusta, E. nigra, E. racemosa, E. crebra, E. exserta, E. seeana, Lophostemon confertus, L. suaveolens, Melaleuca quinquenervia*.
Outside SEQ	Open eucalypt forest and woodland that contains Eucalyptus &/or Corymbia spp. Tree species used for food varies across State and can include *Eucalyptus tereticornis, E. camaldulensis, E. coolabah; E. drepanophylla, E. platyphylla, E. orgadophilla, E. thozetiana, E. melanophloia, E. populnea, E. melliodora, E. dealbata, E. microtheca, E. crebra, E. exserta, E. blakelyi, E. papuana, Corymbia tessellaris, C. citriodora, Melaleuca quinquenervia, M. leucadendra*

To convert scientific names of tree species to common names, use the search function on the Australian Plant Common Name Database on the National Herbarium website https://www.anbg.gov.au/common.names/

Regional Ecosystems (mandatory unless otherwise specified)	
SEQ	**Bioregion 11**: 11.3.2, 11.3.4, 11.3.25, 11.3.26, 11.8.2, 11.8.4, 11.8.5, 11.8.8, 11.9.9, **Bioregion 12**: 12.2.5, 12.2.6, 12.2.7, 12.2.8, 12.2.10, 12.3.2, 12.3.3, 12.3.4, 12.3.5, 12.3.6, 12.3.7, 12.3.9, 12.3.10, 12.3.11, 12.3.14, 12.3.18, 12.3.19, 12.3.20, 12.5.1, 12.5.2, 12.5.3, 12.5.4, 12.5.6, 12.5.7, 12.5.10, 12.5.12, 12.8.1, 12.8.8, 12.8.9, 12.8.11, 12.8.12, 12.8.14, 12.8.16, 12.8.17, 12.8.20, 12.8.24, 12.8.25, 12.9-10.1, 12.9-10.2, 12.9-10.3, 12.9-10.4, 12.9-10.5, 12.9-10.7, 12.9-10.8, 12.9-10.11, 12.9-10.12, 12.9-10.14, 12.9-10.17, 12.9-10.18, 12.9-10.19, 12.9-10.21, 12.9-10.25, 12.9-10.26, 12.9-10.27, 12.9-10.28, 12.9-10.29, 12.11.2, 12.11.3, 12.11.5, 12.11.6, 12.11.7, 12.11.8, 12.11.9, 12.11.14, 12.11.16, 12.11.17, 12.11.18, 12.11.22, 12.11.23, 12.11.24, 12.11.25, 12.11.26, 12.11.27, 12.11.28, 12.12.2, 12.12.3, 12.12.5, 12.12.6, 12.12.7, 12.12.8, 12.12.9, 12.12.11, 12.12.12, 12.12.14, 12.12.15, 12.12.23, 12.12.24, 12.12.25, 12.12.28.
Outside SEQ	**Bioregion 4**: 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.3.5, 4.3.6, 4.3.8, 4.3.10, 4.3.11, 4.4.1, 4.5.3, 4.5.5, 4.5.6, 4.5.8, 4.5.9, 4.7.1, 4.7.7, 4.7.8, 4.9.6, 4.9.10, 4.9.12, 4.9.17, **Bioregion 6**: 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.3.4, 6.3.5, 6.3.7, 6.3.8, 6.3.9, 6.3.11, 6.3.12, 6.3.17, 6.3.18, 6.3.22, 6.3.24, 6.3.25, 6.4.1, 6.4.2, 6.4.3, 6.4.4, 6.5.1, 6.5.2, 6.5.3, 6.5.5, 6.5.6, 6.5.7, 6.5.8, 6.5.9, 6.5.10, 6.5.11, 6.5.13, 6.5.14, 6.5.15, 6.5.16, 6.5.17, 6.5.18, 6.5.19, 6.6.2, 6.7.1, 6.7.2, 6.7.5, 6.7.6, 6.7.7, 6.7.9, 6.7.11, 6.7.12, 6.7.13, 6.7.14, 6.7.17, 6.9.3, **Bioregion 7**: 7.2.3, 7.2.4, 7.2.7, 7.2.11, 7.3.7, 7.3.8, 7.3.9, 7.3.12, 7.3.13, 7.3.14, 7.3.16, 7.3.19, 7.3.20, 7.3.21, 7.3.25, 7.3.26, 7.3.39, 7.3.40, 7.3.42, 7.3.43, 7.3.44, 7.3.45, 7.3.47, 7.3.48, 7.3.50, 7.5.1, 7.5.2, 7.5.3, 7.5.4, 7.8.7, 7.8.8, 7.8.10, 7.8.15, 7.8.16, 7.8.17, 7.8.18, 7.8.19, 7.11.5, 7.11.6, 7.11.13, 7.11.14, 7.11.16, 7.11.18, 7.11.19, 7.11.20, 7.11.21, 7.11.31, 7.11.32, 7.11.33, 7.11.34, 7.11.35, 7.11.37, 7.11.41, 7.11.42,

Outside SEQ *continued*	7.11.43, 7.11.44, 7.11.45, 7.11.46, 7.11.47, 7.11.48, 7.11.49, 7.11.50, 7.11.51, 7.12.4, 7.12.5, 7.12.17, 7.12.21, 7.12.22, 7.12.23, 7.12.24, 7.12.25, 7.12.26, 7.12.27, 7.12.28, 7.12.29, 7.12.30, 7.12.33, 7.12.34, 7.12.35, 7.12.51, 7.12.52, 7.12.53, 7.12.54, 7.12.55, 7.12.56, 7.12.57, 7.12.58, 7.12.59, 7.12.60, 7.12.61, 7.12.62, 7.12.63, 7.12.65, 7.12.66, 7.12.69, **Bioregion 7**: 8.1.5, 8.2.3, 8.2.6, 8.2.7, 8.2.8, 8.2.11, 8.2.12, 8.2.13, 8.2.14, 8.3.1, 8.3.2, 8.3.3, 8.3.5, 8.3.6, 8.3.8, 8.3.10, 8.3.11, 8.3.13, 8.5.1, 8.5.2, 8.5.3, 8.5.5, 8.5.6, 8.5.7, 8.9.1, 8.10.1, 8.11.1, 8.11.3, 8.11.4, 8.11.5, 8.11.6, 8.11.8, 8.11.10, 8.11.12, 8.12.4, 8.12.5, 8.12.6, 8.12.7, 8.12.8, 8.12.9, 8.12.12, 8.12.14, 8.12.20, 8.12.22, 8.12.23, 8.12.25, 8.12.26, 8.12.27, 8.12.29, 8.12.31, 8.12.32, **Bioregion 9**: 9.3.1, 9.3.2, 9.3.3, 9.3.4, 9.3.5, 9.3.6, 9.3.7, 9.3.8, 9.3.10, 9.3.11, 9.3.13, 9.3.14, 9.3.15, 9.3.16, 9.3.17, 9.3.19, 9.3.20, 9.3.21, 9.3.22, 9.3.27, 9.4.1, 9.4.2, 9.4.3, 9.5.1, 9.5.3, 9.5.4, 9.5.5, 9.5.6, 9.5.7, 9.5.8, 9.5.9, 9.5.10, 9.5.11, 9.5.12, 9.5.15, 9.5.16, 9.5.17, 9.7.1, 9.7.2, 9.7.3, 9.7.4, 9.7.5, 9.7.6, 9.8.1, 9.8.2, 9.8.3, 9.8.4, 9.8.5, 9.8.9, 9.8.10, 9.8.11, 9.8.13, 9.10.1, 9.10.3, 9.10.4, 9.10.5, 9.10.7, 9.10.8, 9.11.1, 9.11.2, 9.11.3, 9.11.4, 9.11.5, 9.11.7, 9.11.10, 9.11.12, 9.11.13, 9.11.14, 9.11.15, 9.11.16, 9.11.17, 9.11.18, 9.11.19, 9.11.21, 9.11.22, 9.11.23, 9.11.24, 9.11.25, 9.11.26, 9.11.28, 9.11.29, 9.11.30, 9.11.31, 9.11.32, 9.12.1, 9.12.2, 9.12.3, 9.12.4, 9.12.5, 9.12.6, 9.12.7, 9.12.10, 9.12.11, 9.12.12, 9.12.13, 9.12.14, 9.12.15, 9.12.16, 9.12.17, 9.12.18, 9.12.19, 9.12.20, 9.12.21, 9.12.22, 9.12.23, 9.12.24, 9.12.25, 9.12.26, 9.12.27, 9.12.28, 9.12.29, 9.12.30, 9.12.31, 9.12.32, 9.12.33, 9.12.35, 9.12.36, 9.12.37, 9.12.38, 9.12.39, 9.12.44, **Bioregion 10**: 10.3.2, 10.3.3, 10.3.5, 10.3.6, 10.3.9, 10.3.10, 10.3.11, 10.3.12, 10.3.13, 10.3.14, 10.3.15, 10.3.17, 10.3.20, 10.3.27, 10.3.28, 10.4.3, 10.4.9, 10.5.1, 10.5.2, 10.5.4, 10.5.5, 10.5.7, 10.5.8, 10.5.9, 10.5.10, 10.5.11, 10.5.12, 10.7.1, 10.7.2, 10.7.3, 10.7.4, 10.7.5, 10.7.9, 10.7.10, 10.7.11, 10.7.12, 10.9.2, 10.9.3, 10.9.5, 10.10.1, 10.10.3, 10.10.4, 10.10.5, 10.10.7, **Bioregion 11**: 11.2.1, 11.2.5, 11.3.1, 11.3.2, 11.3.3, 11.3.4, 11.3.5, 11.3.6, 11.3.7, 11.3.9, 11.3.10, 11.3.12, 11.3.13, 11.3.14, 11.3.15, 11.3.16, 11.3.17, 11.3.18, 11.3.19, 11.3.21, 11.3.23, 11.3.25, 11.3.26, 11.3.27, 11.3.28, 11.3.29, 11.3.30, 11.3.32, 11.3.33, 11.3.35, 11.3.36, 11.3.37, 11.3.38, 11.3.39, 11.4.2, 11.4.3, 11.4.7, 11.4.8, 11.4.9, 11.4.10, 11.4.12, 11.4.13, 11.5.1, 11.5.2, 11.5.3, 11.5.4, 11.5.5, 11.5.7, 11.5.8, 11.5.9, 11.5.12, 11.5.13, 11.5.14, 11.5.17, 11.5.18, 11.5.20, 11.5.21, 11.7.1, 11.7.2, 11.7.3, 11.7.4, 11.7.6, 11.7.7, 11.8.1, 11.8.2, 11.8.4, 11.8.5, 11.8.8, 11.8.11, 11.8.12, 11.8.14, 11.8.15, 11.9.1, 11.9.2, 11.9.3, 11.9.5, 11.9.6, 11.9.7, 11.9.9, 11.9.10, 11.9.11, 11.9.13, 11.9.14, 11.10.1, 11.10.2, 11.10.3, 11.10.4, 11.10.5, 11.10.6, 11.10.7, 11.10.9, 11.10.11, 11.10.12, 11.10.13, 11.11.1, 11.11.2, 11.11.3, 11.11.4, 11.11.6, 11.11.7, 11.11.8, 11.11.9, 11.11.10, 11.11.11, 11.11.12, 11.11.13, 11.11.14, 11.11.15, 11.11.16, 11.11.17, 11.11.19, 11.11.20, 11.12.1, 11.12.2, 11.12.3, 11.12.5, 11.12.6, 11.12.7, 11.12.8, 11.12.9, 11.12.10, 11.12.13, 11.12.14, 11.12.15, 11.12.16, 11.12.17, 11.12.19, 11.12.20, **Bioregion 13**: 13.3.1, 13.3.2, 13.3.3, 13.3.4, 13.3.5, 13.3.7, 13.9.2, 13.11.1, 13.11.2, 13.11.3, 13.11.4, 13.11.5, 13.11.6, 13.11.8, 13.11.9, 13.12.1, 13.12.2, 13.12.3, 13.12.4, 13.12.5, 13.12.6, 13.12.8, 13.12.9, 13.12.10.

For more information, contact Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy, phone 135VEG (135 834).

A description of each regional ecosystem can be accessed online at
https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/plants/ecosystems/descriptions

QUEENSLAND-WIDE: Regulatory requirements for vegetation clearing in essential habitat areas

Land owners should first refer to the list of '**exempt clearing works**' listed in Schedule 21 of the **Planning Regulation 2017**.(see summary Table 1 below). These exemptions have not changed with the release of updated essential habitat mapping that occurred in December 2018. They authorise certain clearing activities without the need to notify or seek approval under the vegetation management framework.

For low risk clearing that is not authorised by exempt clearing works in Schedule 21, (i.e. larger infrastructure, or ongoing veg management activities like weed management) – a notification can be submitted under the **Accepted development vegetation clearing codes**, and the clearing activity must comply with practices in the relevant code. ADVCC's include clearing fodder harvesting, native forest practice, weed control, environmental clearing, extractive industries and encroachment.

For larger scale clearing activities, development approval under the ***Planning Act 2016*** is required. A development application must demonstrate how essential habitat for koalas will be maintained. The '*State Development Code 16 for Native Vegetation Clearing*' provides a range of 'acceptable solutions' which can be used to ensure clearing will maintain the current extent of essential habitat.

For example, if clearing is required for public safety, infrastructure, fodder harvesting, or necessary environmental clearing such as land restoration or natural disaster preparation, the 'acceptable solutions' available to maintain the current extent of essential habitat include:
  (a) Do not clear.
  (b) Do not exceed specified widths and areas within the Code. In sparse REs, 20m width and 2ha area.
  (c) Provide an offset for any significant residual impact in accordance with the Environmental Offsets Policy.
  (d) Be reasonably rehabilitated (requires environmental management plan including rehabilitation).

Table 1: What are **Schedule 21** '**Exempt clearing works**' relevant to agriculture and grazing?

In Category X land, clearing for all purposes on freehold, Indigenous and leasehold land.
In Category B [remnant veg], C [regulated regrowth], R [regrowth watercourse] and Category A [offset/declared area] areas:-

- No notification form to DNRME required.
- Fire break to protect infrastructure (20m or 1.5X height of tallest woody vegetation).
- Fire management line (10m).
- Fire to reduce hazardous fuel load (*Fire & Emergency Services Act 1990*)
- Establish a fence, road, track (10m) in Cat B- least concern, Cat C -regrowth and Cat R regrowth watercourse.
- Necessary to maintain infrastructure (fences, tracks, stock yards, water facilities, buildings, airstrips).
- Reduce imminent risk of personal injury or infrastructure damage.
- In a declared natural disaster situation to minimise human injury, property loss or environmental damage (within one year of declaration).
- Remediate contaminated land (listed in contaminated land register).
- By the <u>lessee /owner</u> to source construction timber for infrastructure <u>repair</u> on the land (in Cat A, Cat B, Cat C and Cat R). May require restoration area of similar extent.
- By the <u>freehold owner</u> to source construction timber from any owned land, maintain infrastructure on any land and /or establish <u>new</u> infrastructure on a cleared area <2ha (in Cat B least concern, Cat C, Cat R).
- By the <u>lessee</u> to source construction timber and establish <u>new</u> built infrastructure on a cleared area <2ha (in Cat B least concern, Cat C, Cat R).
- Clearing within an Area Management Plan.
- For forest practice except on leasehold land.
- Maintain a garden or orchard.
- Within a watercourse, as an unavoidable consequence of a clearing permit and cleared area is <0.5ha.

More information on clearing exemptions https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/vegetation/exemptions

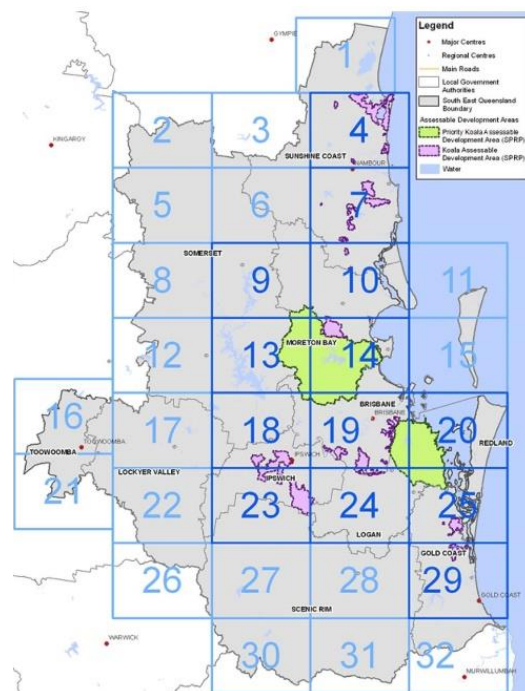## Other koala related legislation not related to the essential habitat mapping

Special regulations also exist under Queensland's planning framework for koala habitat areas in <u>south east Queensland</u> where koalas populations are the highest. Under the **Planning Regulation 2017**, separate koala habitat mapping exists that only applies in koala assessable development areas and is <u>assessed separately to regulated vegetation under the VMA</u>.

Koala Assessable Development Areas (KADA) in south east Queensland are shown in this map as the green and purple areas. Different protection requirements for impacts on koala habitat apply to these areas. Maps and more details available from https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/koalas/mapping/#identified_koala_broad_hectare_area

You can request a property map of koala habitat values and koala assessable development areas to be emailed to you via this link: https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/koalas/mapping/maprequestform.php

Local governments assess applications to clear koala habitat within these areas in accordance with Schedule 11 of the Planning Regulation 2017.

Property Maps of Assessable Vegetation obtained through the VMA do not override restrictions on clearing koala habitat in these areas.

To protect the koalas themselves during authorised clearing, the ***Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017* (Koala Plan)** requires clearing of koala habitat trees in Koala Districts A and B to be undertaken in a sequential manner to ensure the safety of koalas leaving the site. In Koala District A, clearing of habitat trees with a diameter greater than 10cm at 1.3m high, requires the presence of a suitably qualified koala spotter.

Koala District A https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/koalas/legislation/pdf/koala-district-a.pdf
Koala District B https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/koalas/legislation/pdf/koala-district-b.pdf
More details in *Koala Plan 2017* https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/2017-09-01/sl-2017-0152

More information on koala mapping, legislation and policies available from https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/koalas/ or phone the Department of Environment and Science on 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

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Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) self-referral guidelines

Koalas are listed as a vulnerable species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC).* New clearing activities that are likely to have significant effect on koalas may need to be self-referred to the Australian Government for EPBC assessment. For example, significant effect may be the loss of two to 20ha of high-quality koala habitat critical for their survival, depending on proposed actions and mitigation measures. EPBC referral guidelines available from http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/epbc-act-referral-guidelines-vulnerable-koala or phone 1800 803 772.