

SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS DEDICATED TO ACHIEVING ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMICAL BALANCE

LEADING THE WAY IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

KOALA ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR RESIDENTAL DEVELOPMENT

10 PACIFIC DRIVE, PORT MACQUARIE

January 2021

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1. Introduction

1.1 Development Proposal

The subject site is a 0.5-hectare land parcel located on Pacific Drive in Port Macquarie, New South Wales. The property is zoned R3 – Medium Density Residential.

The proposed development is for a multi-storey residential development over four residential Lots including Lot 1 DP 538077, Lot 2 DP 538077, Lot A DP 441800 and Lot 101 DP 1244390. The subject site currently contains a Motel and cleared vacant Lots. The development

Figure 1: Subject Site





2. Application of the SEPP

To encourage the conservation and management of Koala habitat, The State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2020 commenced on 30 November 2020 to replace and repeal the State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat protection) 2019 (2019 Koala SEPP). The Koala SEPP 2020 replicates the objectives and provisions of SEPP 44, which was in force from 1995 through to 2019. The SEPP was amended on 16 October 2020, which removed the use of a 'Koala Development Application Map'. Thus, this no longer applies.

The provisions of this State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) are applicable to an area of land which:

- Is in a Council area listed in Schedule 1 of the SEPP, and
- is at least one-hectare in area

If an existing, approved Koala Plan of Management (KPoM) is held over the land, the provisions of the Koala Habitat Protection SEPP are not required to be implemented and the development must comply with the approved KPoM. The Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Draft Coastal KPoM applies to the land within the subject site however this is still in draft. As such, no approved KPoM is currently held over the subject site.

Koala Habitat Protection SEPP Definitions

Under the Koala Habitat Protection SEPP, Potential Koala Habitat is defined as *areas of native vegetation* where trees of the types listed in Schedule 2 constitute at least 15% of the total number of trees in the upper or lower strata of the tree component.

Under the Koala Habitat Protection SEPP, Core Koala Habitat is defined as an *area of land with a resident* population of koalas, evidenced by attributes such as breeding females, being females with young, and recent sightings of and historical records of a population.

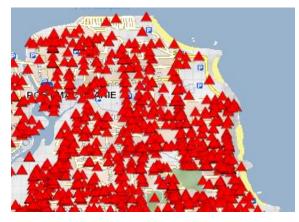
3. Survey Methods & Results

3.1 Desktop Assessment - Koala Records

Koala records in the locality were obtained from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Bionet Atlas (DPIE 2021b). Within a 2.5-kilometre radius of the study area, there are thousands of koala records, over 50 records are within the last five years. The most recent Koala record is from October 2019. This record is located 370m to the east of the site on Owen Street. However no records occur within the subject site.

Figure 2: Local Koala Records

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3.2 Koala Evidence Surveys

Field surveys were undertaken across the site by a Biodiversity Australia Ecologist on 6th and 7th January 2021. Searches for Koala scats were undertaken under all trees in the development footprint, and opportunistically across the site. Spotlighting and Call Playback also occurred on those nights. No Koalas were observed during the field survey and no Koala scats were found.

3.3 Vegetation Composition Surveys

A Biodiversity Australia Ecologist undertook a vegetation assessment over the entire subject site. The vegetation within the subject site was restricted to occasional lower strata trees and regularly maintained exotic grass species, native vegetation structure was not present (Photo Plate X).

Photo Plate 1: Site Condition





4. Koala Impact Assessment

4.1 Koala Habitat Protection SEPP

Does the Land Appy?

In order for Koala Habitat Protection SEPP to be applicable to the development the area of the land, together with adjoining land in the same ownership, an area of more than 1ha. The subject site totals approximately 0.5ha in total and hence the Koala Habitat Protection SEPP is not applicable.

Step 1 -Is the land potential Koala habitat

Not Applicable

Step 2 - Is the land core Koala habitat

Not Applicable

Step 3 - Can development consent be granted in relation to core Koala habitat?

Not Applicable

4.2 EPBC Act Koala Habitat Assessment

The condition on site has been assessed using the Koala habitat assessment tool from the EPBC Act Referral Guidelines (DotE 2014). To qualify as critical habitat, it must score 5 or more.

Table 1: Koala habitat assessment

Attribute	Score	Reason		
Koala occurrence	2	Desktop	A number of Koala records (Bionet Atlas) occur within 2.5km of the site as well as previous and current survey records.	
		On-ground	Nil Koala records within the subject site.	
Vegetation structure and composition	0	Desktop	Analysis of the subject site from up to date aerial imagery shows that the site is void of almost all vegetation above ground strata with very occasional lower strata trees which are not Koala Food Trees.	
		On-ground	Subject site does not contain Koala Food Trees or provide connectivity value.	
Habitat connectivity	0	The subject site does not contribute to habitat connectivity.		
Key existing threats	0	Desktop	OEH Bionet has records of Koala road kill in locality on Ocean Drive.	



		On-ground	Pacific Drive would pose a high risk of road strike. Domestic and wild dogs in surrounding areas would be a high threat to local Koalas.
Recovery value	0	The following factors indicate that it is uncertain if the habitat to be removed is important for achieving the interim recovery objectives for the Koala: Risk of dog attack and car strike in study area Removal of site vegetation will not affect movement throughout the	
Total	2	regional corrido	e does not qualify as critical habitat

5. Conclusion

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Following a comprehensive assessment from desktop assessment, targeted survey, and habitat assessment it can safely and confidently be determined that the subject site provides no ecological function to the local Port Macquarie Koala population for foraging, connectivity, shelter or any other ecological function. The Subject site does not qualify for assessment under the Koala Habitat Protection SEPP and does not require federal referral.





6. References

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