

SEQ koala habitat map update – September 2021



What is a *core koala habitat area (KHA)*?

Core KHAs represent the best quality koala habitat areas, based on modelling of biophysical measures (such as climate), suitable vegetation (for both food and shelter), and koala sighting records. KHA's only exist in koala district A in SEQ.

What is a *locally refined koala habitat area (LRKHA)*?

LRKHA include areas of mature vegetation not meeting the State's criteria for core koala habitat areas, but may contain locally important habitat for koalas.

Over 714,000ha is regulated for koala conservation in south east Queensland SEQ.

Changes in the September 2021 release of koala habitat maps:-

(a) 24,000ha of Locally Refined Koala Habitat Areas (LRKHA's) converted to Core Koala Habitat Areas (KHA).

(b) Map verification processes by government and landholders removed an additional 25,600ha from LRKHA's.

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- Koala habitat area maps are updated annually to include new, amended or revoked areas.
- Local and state governments have been verifying and transitioning LRKHA into core koala habitat areas KHA over a two-year period, since August 2020. LRKHA are regulated by local government.
- There have been no other changes to koala habitat areas, koala priority areas or koala habitat restoration areas since February 2020.
- Clearing of KHA is prohibited within Koala Priority Areas (KPAs), subject to certain exemptions. Clearing of native vegetation can still occur in Category X areas on Property Maps of Assessable Vegetation PMAV, if locked in prior to 7 February 2020.
- Clearing exemptions within a KHA for Category B, C and R regulated vegetation include a one-off development footprint up to 500m², necessary firebreaks and fire management lines, removal of native vegetation posing an imminent safety risk, clearing for a fence or road, native forest practice and essential management. Full list of exempted developments defined in Schedule 24 of the Planning Regulation 2017 <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-0078>.
- Clearing native vegetation under the Accepted Development Vegetation Clearing Codes (ADVCC) is still accepted development in most cases, however limitations apply in KHA in some ADVCCs. Check the code description <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/vegetation/clearing-codes>.
- If a KHA or LRKHA is mapped incorrectly, you can request to amend or revoke the area. For example, if the mapped area does not contain native woody vegetation or the type of vegetation is not a koala habitat regional ecosystem. See: <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/koalas/mapping/map-amendment-requests>.

Koalas are listed as vulnerable under state and federal legislation. On 7 February 2020, the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science DES strengthened regulations for koala habitat areas KHA in south east Queensland (SEQ). KHA are assessed separately to vegetation management and essential habitat.

Koala Priority Areas (KPAs) and Koala Habitat Areas (KHAs) in south east Queensland.

Different protection requirements for impacts on koala habitat apply to these areas. Maps and more details are available from <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/koalas/mapping/legislation-policy> and https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/211735/seq-koala-habitat-mapping-factsheet.pdf.

AgForce Queensland Farmers provides members with an annual GeoPDF property map or you can request a free online property map of koala habitat areas from this Queensland Government website: <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/vegetation/maps/map-request>.

Koala habitat mapping is also available from Queensland Globe <https://qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au/>.

- Qld Government assesses vegetation clearing in koala habitat areas (green areas on map).
- Local government will assess applications not involving clearing within the Koala Priority Areas (in accordance with Schedule 11 of the Planning Regulation 2017).
- Core koala habitat areas (dark green on the map) are best quality habitats, based on modelled climate, vegetation and koala sighting records.
- The Chief Executive from the Department of Environment and Science determines koala habitat areas.
- Non-statutory restoration areas identify “koala habitat restoration areas” of high conservation value and low threats (orange areas on a koala habitat map).

Koala Habitat Tree is a koala feeding tree (Genus *Corymbia*, *Melaleuca*, *Lophostemon* or *Eucalyptus*) or shelter tree (Genus *Angophora* or other genera)

Regulatory requirements for clearing native vegetation in KPA and KHA

Clearing of native woody vegetation is prohibited in Koala Priority Areas KPA (criss-cross brown hatches on the Koala Conservation Plan Map (Figure 1). Exemptions include assessable development or reconfiguring a lot within koala broad-hectare areas, exempted developments including State forests / timber reserves or developments approved prior to 7 February 2020.

Clearing in Koala Habitat Areas KHA outside the KPA areas is Assessable Development, unless an exempted activity, extractive industry approved prior to 7 February 2020 or an approved activity within the koala broad-hectare areas.

Exemptions for clearing koala habitat are listed in Schedule 24 of the [Planning Regulation 2017](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/sl-2017-0078) <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/sl-2017-0078>. These include development approvals and clearing Category X on a PMAV made before 7 February 2020. Certain clearing activities are exempt without the need to notify or seek approval under the vegetation management framework.

Low risk clearing that is not authorised by exempt clearing works in Schedule 24, requires prior notification under the [Accepted development vegetation clearing codes](#) ADVCC and the clearing activity must comply with practices in the relevant code. ADVCC's include clearing for infrastructure, native forest practice, weed control, necessary environmental clearing, extractive industries, and managing regrowth.

For SEQ Koala Habitat Areas

Sequential clearing of koala habitat trees in SEQ Koala District A or B (as per Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017).

- Clear in stages, with at least a 12-hour gap in clearing activity (If 6ha or less, only clear up to 50 per cent. If more than 6ha area, up to 3ha or 3 per cent of the area).
- Provide appropriate habitat links during clearing.
- Do not clear a habitat tree if a koala is present.
- A skilled koala spotter is required if habitat tree diameter is greater than 10cm at 1.3m above the ground.

Changes to Regrowth ADVCC Code

- New notification and clearing limitations (10ha per lot, renotify and self-audit).
- No clearing for agriculture.
- No clearing which will cause disconnection between two or more environmentally sensitive areas 100m in width.

Changes to Weeds ADVCC Code

- New notification and clearing limitations (10ha per lot, renotify and self-audit).
- Weed management methods need to be necessary and reasonable.
- Can only clear immature koala habitat trees, if area is managed to support natural regeneration of koala habitat trees.

Changes to Necessary Environmental Clearing ADVCC Code

- Allows clearing of mature trees and koala habitat trees if retention prevents flood preparation works.
- Avoid or minimise clearing in koala habitat areas for channel diversion, or not to exceed the 10m width limit and a koala offset is secured.
- Areas to be managed to support natural regeneration of koala habitat trees.
- Avoid or minimise clearing in essential habitat. Clearing width limits are 5 metres (for a lot less than 5ha) or 10 metres (for a lot greater than 5ha) for linear infrastructure (fence, road, track) and development areas up to 500m² in Category B, C and R, unless a koala offset is secured.
- Cleared area for infrastructure, airstrip and extractive industry up to 500 m² in Category B or C areas.
- Avoid clearing in Category B for an extractive industry. Koala offset may be required for Cat C, R or X.
- Diversion of a watercourse or drainage feature in Category C up to 500m².

For larger scale clearing activities, development approval (DA) under the *Planning Act 2017* is required. A development application must demonstrate how koala habitat and koala safe movement will be maintained. The “**Assessment Benchmarks in relation to Koala Habitat in SE Qld**”

https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/102858/koala-assessment-benchmarks-guideline.pdf and “**State Code 25: Development in SE Qld koala habitat areas**”

https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/102836/koala-state-development-assessment-provisions-sdap-guideline.pdf provide a range of ‘acceptable solutions’ to ‘Performance

Outcomes’ to ensure clearing applications minimise impact on koala habitat. Developing greenfield sites within the seven identified **koala broad-hectare areas** in SEQ are subject to assessment benchmarks within the DA.

More information on koala mapping, legislation and policies

Queensland Department of Environment and Science website

<https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/koalas/mapping>.

Phone 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or email: koala.assessment@des.qld.gov.au

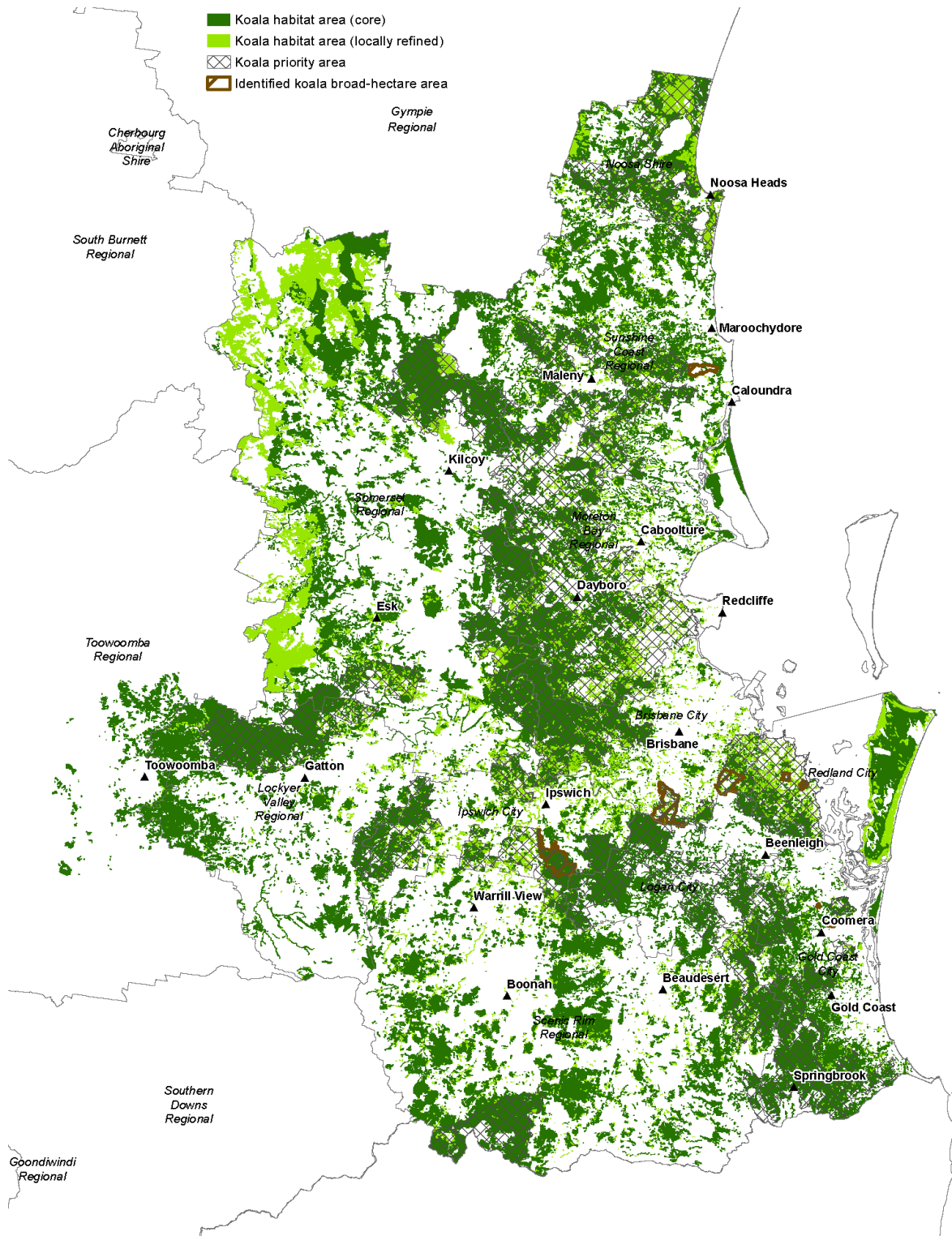
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***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* self-referral guidelines**

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 are available from <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/epbc-act-referral-guidelines-vulnerable-koala> or phone 1800 803 772.

Figure 1: The SEQ Koala Conservation Plan Map for koala district A, showing koala priority areas KPA, habitat areas KHA and locally refined koala habitat areas LRKHA. Approximately 50 per cent of LRKHA (light green) areas have converted to KHA in the September 2021 release of koala map updates.



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