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Proposed Georges River Koala Reserve

Where can I find out if my property is within the proposed Georges River Koala Reserve?

Landholders can use the [Draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan Viewer](#) (the Plan Viewer) to find out if their property is within the Georges River Koala Reserve. The viewer allows landholders to view important vegetation and koala habitat present on their land.

Why is the NSW Government establishing the Georges River Koala Reserve?

Koalas require large, connected areas of habitat so they can eat, move and breed. The Plan will establish the Georges River Koala Reserve, to protect the most important north–south koala movement corridor along the Georges River between Appin and Kentlyn. This area has environmental conditions that support preferred koala feed trees. The reserve will facilitate movement of koalas between Campbelltown and the Southern Highlands and promote the genetic diversity of the species.

The establishment of the Georges River Koala Reserve was recognised in the Chief Scientist Koala Report (2020) as essential to the persistence of the Southern Sydney koala population. The reserve will protect and manage up to 1,885 hectares (including ecological restoration). Earmarking of the first 800 hectares of publicly owned land to be set aside as part of the reserve was announced by the NSW Government in November 2018.

In the first five years of the Plan’s implementation, 100,000 trees will be planted to restore koala habitat in Georges River Koala Reserve, as well as other important areas of koala habitat around Appin and other locations in the strategic conservation area. It is part of the Plan’s aim to restore up to 200 hectares of important koala habitat within the reserve.

The reserve will give local communities accessible public space for recreation. It will also offer potential opportunities for educational activities and koala-based tourism.

Why is the NSW Government proposing environmental conservation zoning of some areas in the proposed reserve?

Land in the proposed Georges River Koala Reserve is to be protected for its important environmental value and is identified by the Plan as 'non-certified—avoided for biodiversity purposes'. The Plan proposes to zone avoided land for environmental conservation (E2) to protect biodiversity on these lands.

The environmental conservation (E2) zone will be applied to the avoided land identified by the Plan at the time the Plan is approved. The [Plan Viewer](#) identifies land that the department proposes to zone for environmental conservation (E2) under the proposed SEPP. The proposed environmental zoning will not affect current uses of the land, and landowners can continue to live on their land, using their properties as they lawfully did before the Plan commenced. For more information on environmental conservation (E2) zoning refer to the FAQ 'Land categories and conservation zoning' on the [website](#).

Will my land be acquired if my property is within the proposed reserve?

The department will consider submissions to finalise the Plan and the Georges River Koala Reserve proposal. Any future decision to acquire land in the proposed reserve will be subject to further consultation with landholders and approval of the Plan.

An acquisition framework is being developed to guide decision-making and the processes that will be used to acquire land for the reserve. As part of this, the department will consult closely with landowners prior to acquiring land to establish the reserve.

Properties will be acquired in close consultation with landholders. Landholders will be able to live on their land until they are willing to sell their land through a voluntary acquisition process.

How might properties be acquired in the proposed reserve?

Property acquisition is undertaken according to the procedures that are established by Property Acquisition NSW. The Act that governs compensation payable on purchase is the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991* (NSW).

The department proposes to introduce a new State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) for strategic conservation planning. The proposed SEPP will identify land for future acquisition once the Georges River Koala Reserve proposal is finalised, and as funding becomes available.

The Office of Strategic Lands will be responsible for acquiring land for future reserves established under the Plan. It is proposed that all properties identified for acquisition be acquired through voluntary agreement (including market purchase, property acquisition by agreement or active acquisition). Compulsory acquisition may be used in limited circumstances and only when voluntary methods have been unsuccessful.

Why is my land included in the proposed reserve when I have limited vegetation or have never seen a koala on my property?

Koalas require large, connected areas of habitat so they can eat, move and breed. The proposed Georges River Koala Reserve is recognised in the Chief Scientist Koala Report (2020) as essential to the persistence of the Southern Sydney koala population. The corridor facilitates regional movement of koalas between Campbelltown and the Southern Highlands and promotes the genetic diversity of the species.

While some areas in this corridor are now cleared, they were once koala habitat and therefore provide an opportunity for the ecological restoration of habitat. Restoration in these areas will help to improve connectivity and expand the total area of koala habitat in South Western Sydney.

Koalas can be hard to spot. This corridor contains high-fertility shale and shale-influenced transition soil that supports preferred koala feed trees for the Southern Sydney koala population including Grey Box, Grey Gum, and Narrow-leaved Ironbark trees. These cleared areas provide an opportunity for ecological restoration to improve connectivity and expand the total area of koala habitat in South Western Sydney.

How will the fencing of Appin Road affect my land?

The Plan will fund the installation of koala exclusion fencing on both sides of Appin Road between Mount Gilead and Appin Village, in all areas not fenced by Transport for NSW through the planned upgrade of the road. This will occur in the first five years of the Plan's implementation.

Transport for NSW is primarily responsible for funding and implementing mitigation measures to reduce vehicle strikes involving koalas and other animals along major roads.

Two Reviews of Environmental Factors have been released for the upgrade and safety improvements of Appin Road between Rosemeadow and Mount Gilead. These documents can be downloaded from the [Transport for NSW](#) website.

If English is not your first language, please call 131 450. Ask for an interpreter in your language and then ask to be connected to our Information Centre on 1300 305 695.

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