



**Friends of the Koala**  
**Strategic Plan**  
**2019 - 2024**



## About us

Friends of the Koala Inc (FOK) is the peak koala conservation organisation in the Northern Rivers Region of New South Wales. FOK was established in 1986 as a voluntary community-based organisation committed to the conservation of koalas and their habitat, particularly in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales.

For over 30 years FOK has performed a vital role in koala conservation by:

- ✓ relieving the suffering of individual koalas by providing appropriate medical treatment and care;
- ✓ fostering an understanding of koalas and their habitat within the wider community;
- ✓ broadening our knowledge of koala biology and the threats facing the species;
- ✓ conserving wild koala populations by successfully returning healthy koalas to their natural habitat;
- ✓ maintaining and enhancing koala habitat; and
- ✓ undertaking a strong advocacy role with government and taking action, where appropriate, to protect the interests of koalas

FOK's licensed area of operation covers the Richmond River, Tweed, Kyogle and Byron Coast areas of the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service's North Coast Branch. The combined area is in excess of 10,300 square kilometres and encompasses the local government areas of Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed.

FOK is incorporated under the [NSW} Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and is registered under the Australian government Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012.

FOK relies upon competitive government and private sector grants, corporate sponsorship, membership fees, donations, sales of merchandise and koala food trees, as well as general fundraising, to finance the services it provides.



# About us

## **Vision / Mission**

To make a key contribution to Australia's biodiversity by ensuring the conservation of the iconic koala and the preservation and enhancement of koala habitat, particularly in the Northern Rivers Region.

## **Core Business**

In striving to achieve its mission FOK has focussed on the following core business areas:

- ✓ Licensed koala rescue, rehabilitation and release;
- ✓ Habitat protection and enhancement;
- ✓ Community engagement and education;
- ✓ Advocacy;
- ✓ Research assistance; and
- ✓ Our people.



## Going forward 2019 - 2024

Fundamental to consideration of FOK's key objectives and positioning for the next five years and beyond are the opportunities presented by the NSW Government's goal to stabilise and then increase koala numbers across the State as well as reforms to the volunteer wildlife rehabilitation sector.

An Area of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS), emphasis on collaborative landscape-scale, cross-tenure effort in the Northern Rivers has increased significantly. Accordingly, the Committee and stakeholders identified the organisation's branding and marketing as issues requiring ongoing attention. Specifically, what needs to be done to:

- (a) strengthen region-wide community support for, and participation in, FOK's work;
- (b) improve regional veterinary services for koalas; and
- (c) enhance FOK's research capability

Our key strategic objectives for the next five years focus on seven areas which reflect FOK's core business and are consistent with relevant objectives of the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, including the NSW Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector Strategy, the Saving Our Species Iconic Koala Project 2017-2021 and the NSW Koala Strategy which supports it, the Australian Government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and forthcoming recovery plan, the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, and State Environmental Planning Policy 44 — Koala Habitat Protection.

As identified above, these areas, as well as our financial stability, form the core of our organisation's responsibilities:

1. Rescue, rehabilitation and release to the wild of injured, sick and orphaned koalas;
2. Habitat protection and enhancement;
3. Community engagement and education;
4. Advocacy;
5. Research;
6. Our people; and
7. Financial sustainability.



# 1. Rescue, rehabilitation and release

We will provide, and continue to improve, our rescue and rehabilitation service for sick, injured and orphaned koalas within our licensed area of operation with the goal of releasing animals back into the wild.

## Strategic Objectives

- 1.1 Increase FOK's rescue capacity by encouraging community stewardship of koalas and maximising FOK'S ability to undertake koala rescues in varied circumstances and locations.
- 1.2 Exercise best practice methods in the care and rehabilitation of koalas and utilise our expertise and learning to assisting the continuous improvement of licensed care and rehabilitation methods.
- 1.3 Maximise community and government financial support in order to provide the best veterinary services and care possible for koalas.
- 1.4 Encourage business to support the concept of providing their employees with a day's leave to volunteer with FOK.





## 2. Habitat protection and enhancement

We will work to ensure the protection and enhancement of koala habitat with particular emphasis on the Northern Rivers Region.

### Strategic Objectives

- 2.1 Develop our tree nursery as the region's central authority for advice regarding koala habitat management and revegetation as well as the key supplier of koala food tree species.
- 2.2 Maintain, extend and build new partnerships with all levels of government, researchers, community organisations and individual landholders to promote and encourage natural resource management outcomes which provide koala habitat connectivity and assist koala population recovery.
- 2.3 Facilitate, through advocacy and campaigning at all levels of government, robust legislation that protects koalas and their habitat into the future.





We will add to the community's understanding of koalas and engagement in activities to ensure the survival of koalas in the wild.

### Strategic Objectives

- 3.1 Raise the profile of koala conservation issues and promote opportunities for community involvement.
- 3.2 Ensure that visitors to the FOK Care and Research Centre have an enjoyable and educational experience in an authentic koala habitat setting.
- 3.3 Pursue new initiatives and funding for koala-focused community education.
- 3.4 Undertake activities to engage the community in the conservation of koalas.





We will continue to advocate strongly with the three tiers of government taking action where appropriate to protect the interests of koalas.

### Strategic Objectives

- 4.1 Update and inform politicians on conservation issues and reforms that affect koalas.
- 4.2 Meet with representatives from local councils on a regular basis to keep up to date with their work on koala conservation.
- 4.3 Attend conferences and seminars when they arise.
- 4.4 Ensure our patron is kept up to date with important issues affecting koalas.
- 4.5 Speak out whenever it's needed to protect koalas in the Northern Rivers region.





## 5. Research

We will continue to contribute to the body of scientific knowledge in relation to the koala through partnerships with key stakeholders including universities and other research organisations, individual researchers, wildlife hospitals and government, as well as advocating for increased research in identified areas of need.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- 5.1 Maintain, support and extend where possible working relationships with a broad range of academic and research organisations and individuals working in koala-related research.
- 5.2 Ensure that appropriate data collection, storage and retrieval systems are in place to enable sharing as required.
- 5.3 Utilise our extended regional dataset to pursue research funding.





## 6. Our People

We will strengthen the organisation by developing and enhancing a robust membership, volunteer base and management framework.

### Strategic Objectives

- 6.1 Preserve and enhance the organisation's reputation and good standing through inclusive governance, policies and risk management.
- 6.2 Develop the knowledge and skills-base of volunteers through ongoing training and education.
- 6.3 Support and acknowledge volunteers carrying out their roles.
- 6.4 Recruit volunteers on the basis of organisational need.
- 6.5 Maintain a transparent legal, compliance and risk management framework.
- 6.6 Review FOK's communication plan, policies and procedures, funding allocations and financial reporting.





## 7. Financial sustainability

We will enable the delivery of FOK's strategic objectives by ensuring long-term financial health and sustainability.

### Strategic Objectives

- 7.1 Ensure financial accountability in all areas of operation.
- 7.2 Ensure systems, policies and procedures to measure accountability are in place and communicated, including development of budgets and budget review processes.
- 7.3 Secure broad-based financial support and income streams, particularly through significant sponsorships and beneficial donors.





# Monitoring and review

We will review this Strategic Plan in 2024, and in the interim will monitor our achievements through each year's Operational Plan.



# Friends of the Koala

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