

# Record of Proceedings

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## Wollondilly Shire Council

### Community Forum Monday 11 September 2017

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The Community Forum commenced at 6.34pm and was held in the Council Foyer,  
62-64 Menangle Street, Picton 2571.

## WOLLONDILLY SHIRE COUNCIL

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Record of Proceedings of the Community Forum held in the Council Foyer, 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton on Monday 11 September 2017

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<b>OPENING BY THE CHAIRPERSON.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PRESENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ALSO PRESENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>APOLOGIES .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FORMAL COMMUNITY FORUM MATTERS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Wollondilly Koala Conservation Project .....	5
<b>COMMUNITY QUESTION/STATEMENT TIME .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>INFORMAL QUESTION/STATEMENT TIME.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>CONCLUSION AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>YOUR COUNCILLORS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>COMMUNITY FORUM DATES.....</b>	<b>23</b>

## **OPENING BY THE CHAIRPERSON**

The Chairperson, Cr Landow opened the Community Forum at 6.34pm. The Chairperson welcomed all those in attendance at the Community Forum. The Chairperson introduced the Mayor, Cr Hannan; Councillors, the General Manager, Director and Acting Directors to the Community Forum participants.

The Chairperson stated that the electronic recording of the Community Forum and the use of electronic media during the proceedings is not permitted including devices such as laptops, mobile phones, tape recorders and video cameras. The Chairperson requested that participants switch off their mobile phones.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Chairperson acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Land:

I would like to pay my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which this meeting takes place, and also pay respect to Elders both past and present.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors: Landow, Hannan (Mayor), Gould, Banasik, Deeth and Lowry

## **ALSO PRESENT**

General Manager, Acting Executive Director Corporate and Community, Acting Director Planning, Director Infrastructure and Environment, one Environmental Education officer and one Administration Officer.

## **APOLOGIES**

Councillors: Khan and Briggs

## **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Cr Banasik declared a Non-Pecuniary Conflict of Interest in Item PE4 – Darley Street, Planning Proposal – Outcome of Gateway Determination. The reason being he has a number of acquaintances in the area of this proposal. Cr Banasik advised that he would remain in the meeting.

Record of Proceedings of the Community Forum held in the Council Foyer, 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton on Monday 11 September 2017

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Cr Lowry declared a Non-Pecuniary Conflict of Interest in Item PE4 – Darley Street, Planning Proposal – Outcome of Gateway Determination. The reason being one of the property owners are regular customers of his wife’s business and his daughter’s employer. Cr Lowry advised he would leave the meeting during this Item.

Cr Deeth declared a Non-Pecuniary Conflict of Interest in Item PE4 – Darley Street, Planning Proposal – Outcome of Gateway Determination. The reason being the land holders in the application are acquaintances of his. Cr Deeth advised that he would remain in the meeting.

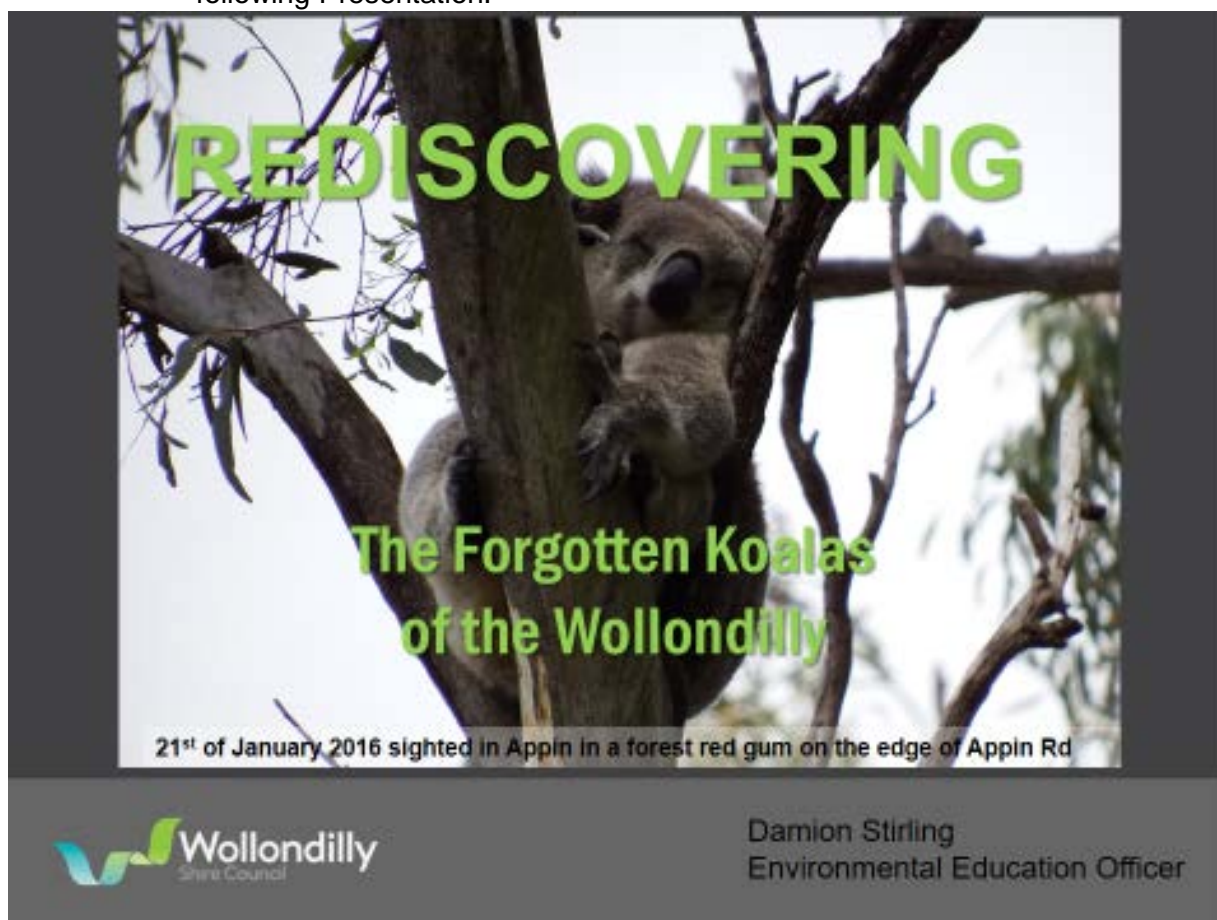
Cr Hannan declared a Non-Pecuniary Conflict of Interest in Item PE3 – The Oaks North Planning Proposal – Outcome of Gateway Determination. The reason being that she has a relative that lives up the street from the proposal. Cr Hannan advised that she would remain in the meeting.

**FORMAL COMMUNITY FORUM MATTERS**

TRIM 9081

1. **Wollondilly Koala Conservation Project**

Council's Environmental Education officer, Damion Stirling in conjunction with Lachlan Wilmott from the Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) gave the following Presentation.



**History**

Koala's are an iconic part of Wollondilly's natural history with the first recorded European sighting occurring near Bargo in 1798 by John Price, who wrote "there is another animal that the natives call Cullawine, which much resembles the Sloths in America."

Pheasants Nest gained its name because this was also the first recorded sighting of a lyrebird (and a wombat).

There is a Wollondilly dream time story about the clinging koala and the Bunyip. – *CW Peck, Australian Legends, 1925.*

**Reasons for Koala decline**

Why have numbers declined since European settlement?

- Hunting for pelts
- Clearing of habitat
- Road Strike
- Disease Chlamydia
- Bushfire loss of habitat & primary feed trees
- Urban threats dogs

June 2017 sighted in Thirlmere near Redbank Creek

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Formal Community Forum Matters

Highlighted was:

- Koala food trees grow on clay soils which are also cleared for housing
- The impact of the 2013 Halls Road Bushfire which burnt out 15,000 hectares
- During mating season koalas are more active and the number of road strikes increase.

Shocking details were also provided in relation to the history of hunting of koalas for their waterproof pelts:

**May 1893** - Archduke Franz Ferdinand came through Wollondilly & the Southern Highlands for a hunting expedition. "About 300 head (were shot) including bears, rock wallabies, kangaroos, hares, duck, pademelons and platypus etc."

- "Koalas disappointed the archduke. He thought them like sloths: pathetic and lazy. They didn't flee."
- Franz shot 8 koalas – "Naturally one hits it with the first shot, but often one needed a whole series of shots before the dead bear fell down from the tree to which it had clung with its forearms and claws."

By 1912, koalas were hunted to functional extinction in South Australia, by the mid 1920's they were down to a few hundred in New South Wales and estimates in Victoria are as low as 500 animals.

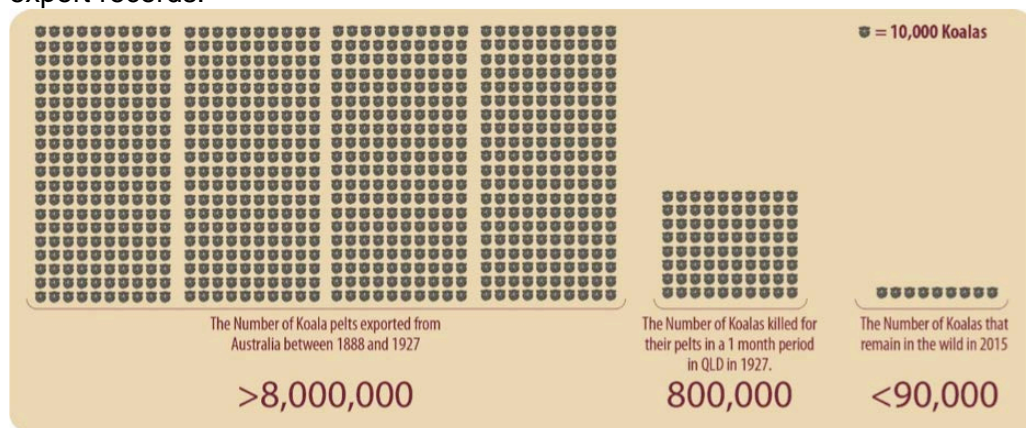
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In 1927 open season was declared in South East Qld where in what has been dubbed Black August 800,000 koala's were killed in a month.

As depicted below the current koala population represents one percent of the population shot before the fur trade. These figures were sourced from actual export records.



Source: Australian National University.  
[www.savethekoala.com/about-us/news-events/akf-shocking-figures-reveal-devastating-impact-koala-fur-trade](http://www.savethekoala.com/about-us/news-events/akf-shocking-figures-reveal-devastating-impact-koala-fur-trade)

In 1937 the koala was declared protected species in all states.

Council's journey with the 'Koala Conservation Project' started around 2½ years ago following numerous reports of koala sightings in urban areas and on road sides, particularly around Appin.



September 2015 mum and baby were sighted in a forest red gum in a suburban front yard in Appin.

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Formal Community  
Forum Matters



Council set up the Wollondilly Koala Hotline in January 2015 in response to regular reports by the community of koalas around Appin.



Since establishing the hotline over 60 sightings of koalas across the shire including Appin, Broughton Pass, Douglas Park, Pheasants Nest, Bargo, Thirlmere, Lakesland, Silverdale and Bents Basin have been reported.

It soon became evident that data in relation to the location of koalas, their preferred habitat and linking habitat corridors was lacking.

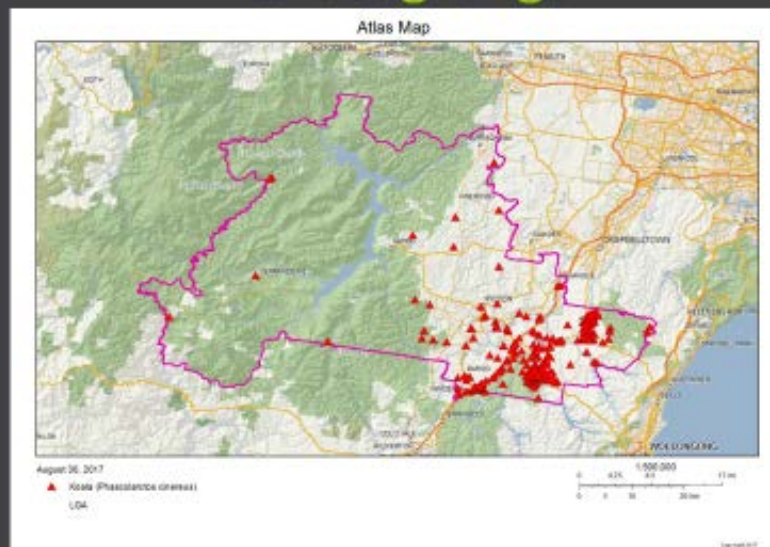


## Koala Surveys

- In 2015 council partnered with the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to get expert advice on koala management.
- In April 2016 a pilot spotlighting survey was commissioned by council in the koala habitat corridor between Appin and Wilton. The survey revealed a healthy population of breeding koalas. Of the 58 sites surveyed over 20% had signs of koalas present and 8 koalas were found.
- In May 2017 council in partnership with OEH received a \$90k grant from the Saving Our Species fund to GPS track 8 koalas, undertake systematic spotlighting surveys and koala habitat vegetation surveys at key locations across the shire.



## Koala Sightings

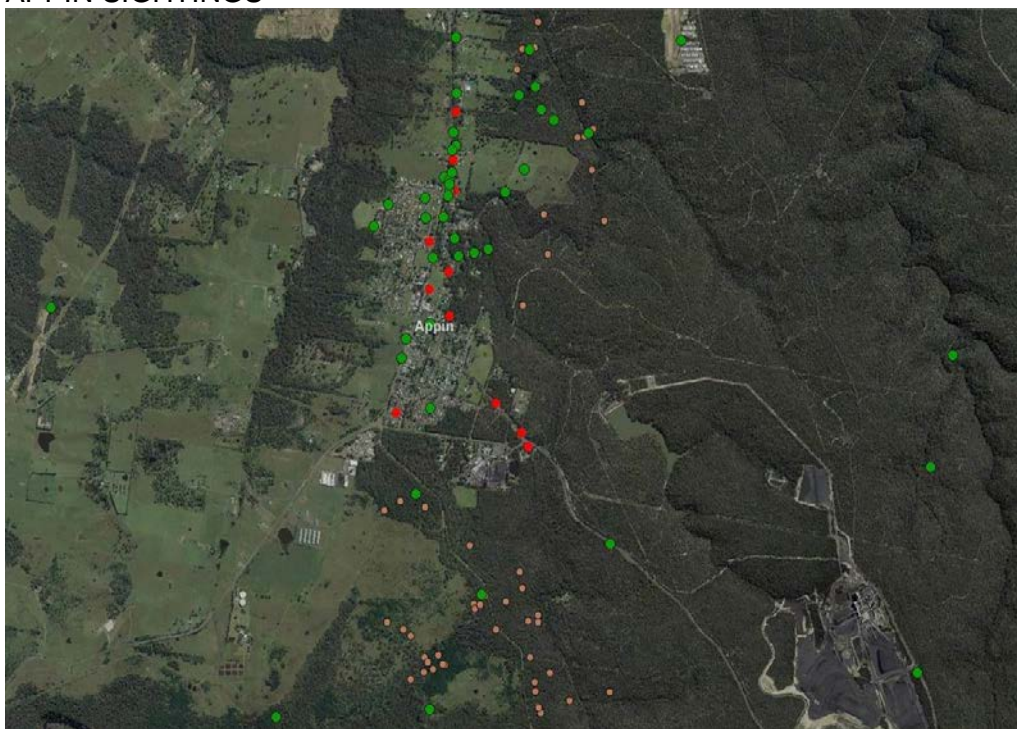


Formal Community Forum Matters

Formal Community Forum Matters

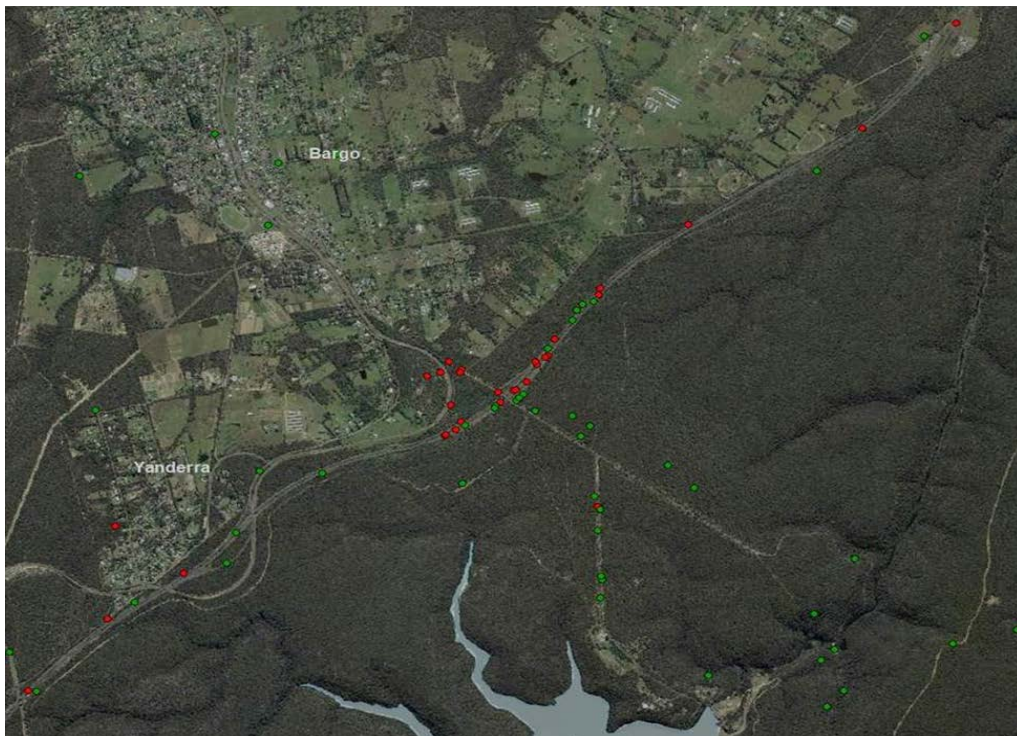
**Koala Hotspots**

**APPIN SIGHTINGS**



Red dots indicate Road Strikes.

**BARGO SIGHTINGS**



Formal Community Forum Matters

Formal Community Forum Matters

Key to defining both core and corridor habitat is the systematic survey work. The work included systematic spotlighting surveys through Appin and Wilton, the deployment of GPS collars for tracking koalas in these areas and 100 vegetation plot surveys mapping koala habitat.

The community were engaged with a number of private landholders contacted to seek access to their properties for spotlighting and vegetation surveys.



In May 2017 OEH along with trained wildlife ecologists deployed 8 GPS tracking collars in the Appin, Wilton and Avon Dam areas. Of the 8 collars deployed 5 are still being tracked. During the week 12 koalas were spotted.

Strict criteria for collaring applied to ensure koalas weren't harmed. Two koalas were too young being under 2yrs old, and a mother and joey were spotted, who also weren't collared.

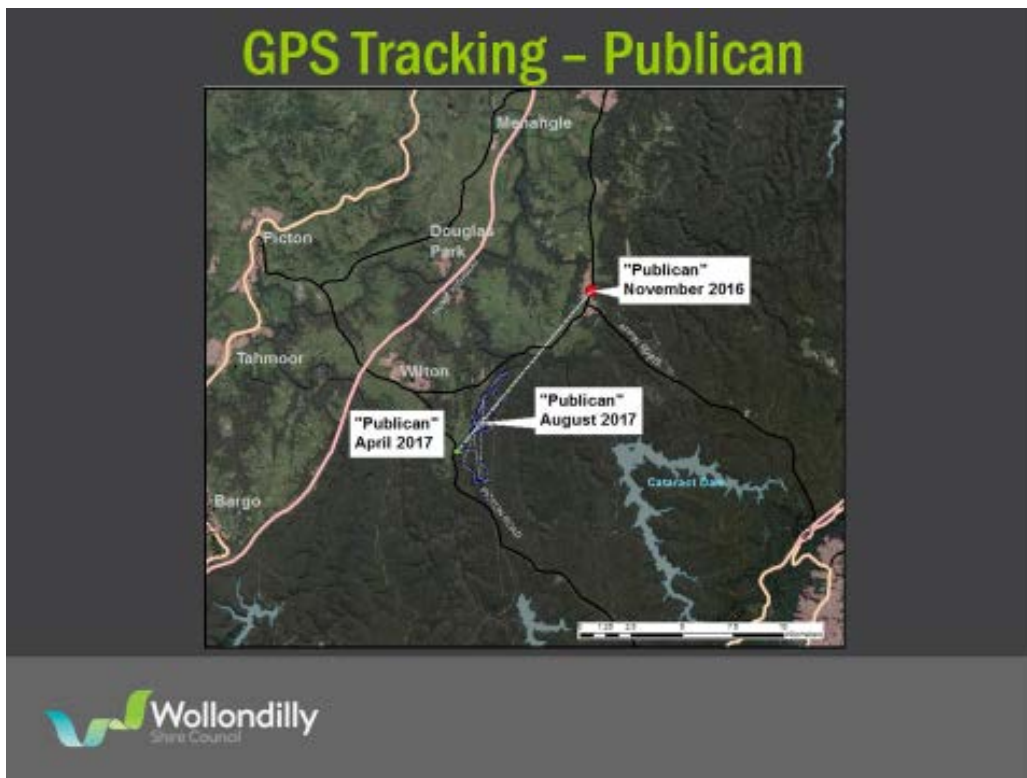
On the capture day a veterinary doctor was present to take DNA samples and a Chlamydia swab. This information is gathered by the University of Sydney Koala Hub and OEH to track population and disease across the landscape.

The koalas will be tracked for 6 months and the collars are then removed.

Studies indicate that there could be upwards of 2500 koalas in preferred habitats across the shire with around a 50 hectare range between koalas.

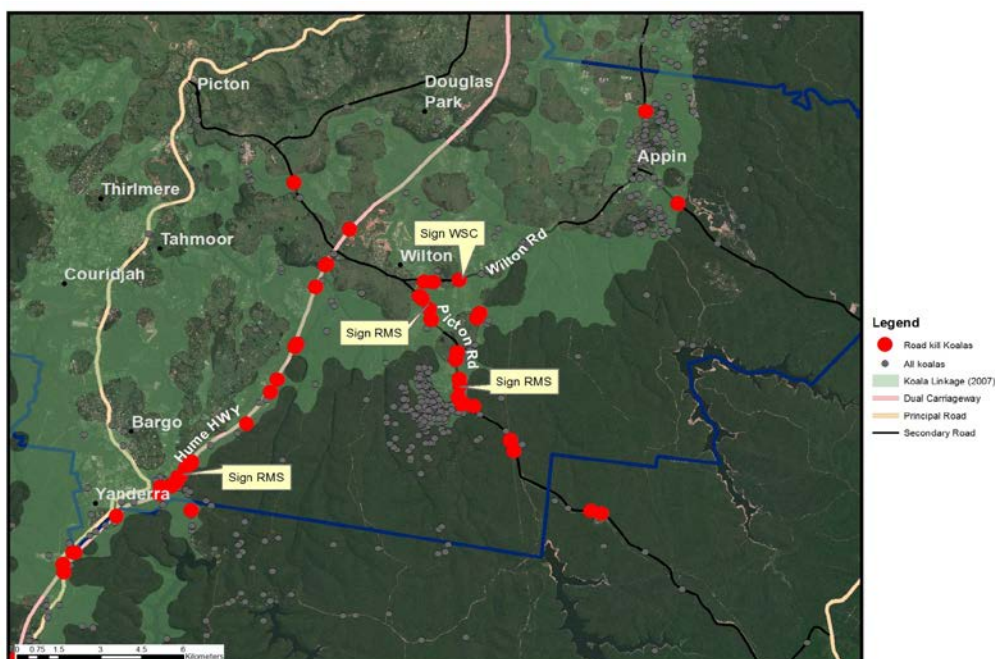
Formal Community Forum Matters

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The above image tracks the movements of one of the collared koala's named the Publican. He gets his name as he was first sighted near Appin Hotel. The blue lines show his movement between Appin and Picton Road via Broughton Pass.

Road Strikes



Formal Community Forum Matters

Formal Community Forum Matters

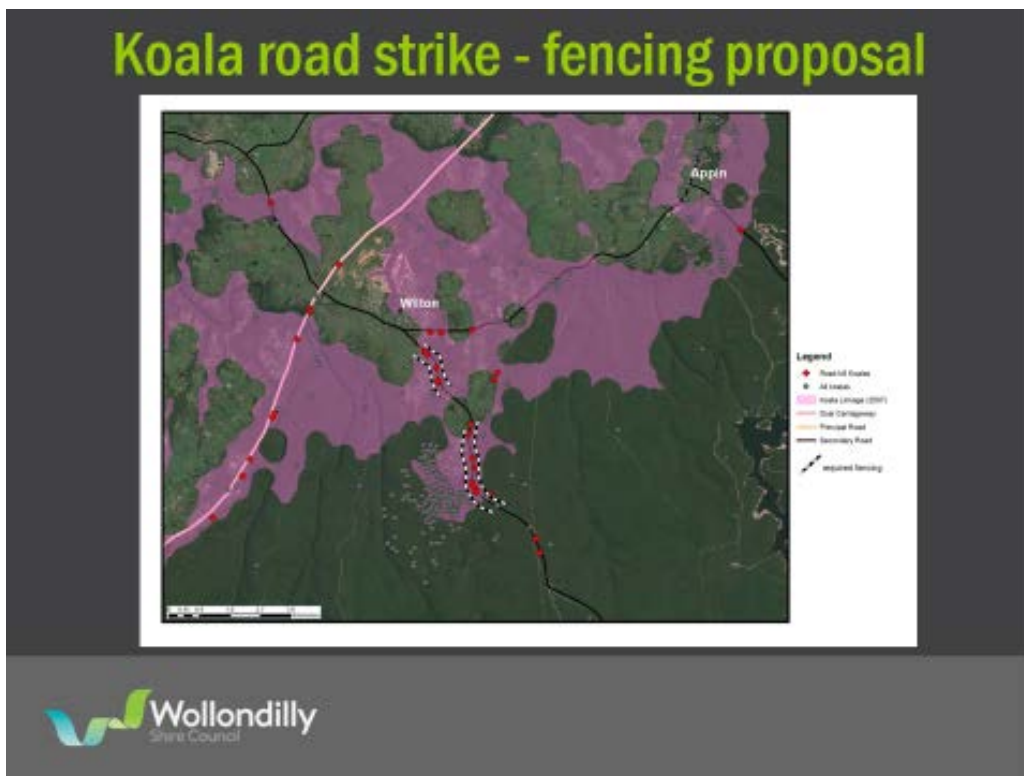
Road strikes are entered into BioNet' a state wide database. 20 road strikes have been reported for Wollondilly in 2017 with 9 killed over a two week period in August on Appin Rd, Picton Rd and the Hume Highway. Data is still being collected in relation to Appin.

Wollondilly WIRES and South Coast Wildlife rescue have been doing a great job of caring for injured koalas of the region.

Dead koalas are collected from site and taken to the University of Sydney Koala Hub in Camden where the koalas are DNA sampled and checked for disease.

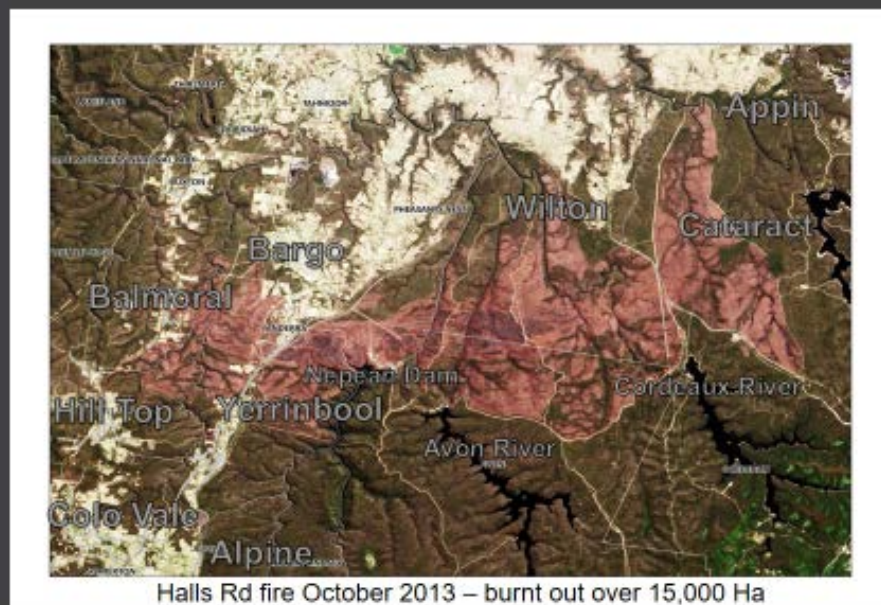
Discussions have been ongoing with Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) for many months in relation to fencing sections of Picton Road. The first section near Allen's Creek is 1.5km long requiring fencing on both sides of the road. The second section at Macarthur Drive is 3km long also requiring both sides of the road to be fenced. In addition, it is proposed to make the concrete culverts koala friendly.

RMS have been quite open to negotiations although it takes time. Cost of the fencing is also a factor at around \$70 per metre.



## Koala decline

- **Bushfire** creates a loss of habitat & primary feed trees.
  - Koalas try and shelter in higher branches
  - Koalas are slow-moving
  - They are susceptible to dehydration
  - Fragmentation of habitat



## Koala decline

- **Chlamydia**
- Sexually transmitted disease; causes blindness (red eye), incontinence & sterility.
- Koalas are more susceptible if stressed: i.e., drought, lack of suitable habitat/feed trees
- At this stage all the koalas we have found north of Picton Rd are disease free however the disease is present around Bargo.



## What can I do?



- **Erect koala friendly fences.** Open form fencing (wire, post and rail) or paling, not colorbond panels. Consider a fence bridge if you have colorbond.
- **Incorporate trees into the fence line** or place overlapping trees on each side of the fence to form a bridge.
- **Fence capping.**
- Koalas may continue to walk along a fence line until they find a gap. They need to escape quickly if a dog is chasing them or if feeling threatened.



Formal Community Forum Matters

What we need to find is a balance between housing for people and homes for koalas. Monitoring takes time and money.

## What can I do?

**Maintain healthy bushland** around your home.

- plant a variety of native feed trees and shrubs.



### Primary feed trees for koalas

- *Eucalyptus parramattensis*
- *Eucalyptus viminalis*
- *Eucalyptus tereticornis*
- *Eucalyptus amplifolia*
- *Eucalyptus robusta*

### Secondary feed trees for koalas

- *Eucalyptus moluccana*
- *Eucalyptus quadrangulata*
- *Eucalyptus punctata*
- *Eucalyptus eugenioides*



## What is Council doing?

### Wollondilly Koala Conservation Project

- Coordinates the Wollondilly Koala Hotline
- Partnering with OEH threatened species unit to survey for koalas, identify their food trees and the extent of habitat corridors.
- Providing survey information to and engaging with OEH planning division, The Department of Planning and Environment and Roads and Maritimes Services to identify conservation outcomes and threat mitigation strategies.
- Partnering with Conservation Volunteers Australia to run volunteer programs to track koalas and restore their habitat.
- Liaising with and sharing information and resources with neighbouring councils Campbelltown and Wingecarribee.
- Information and resource sharing with Wollondilly WIRES.





Record of Proceedings of the Community Forum held in the Council Foyer, 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton, on Monday 11 September 2017

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Formal Community Forum Matters

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A number of questions were asked and answered on the night.

The Wollondilly Koala Hotline was promoted 4677 1100 and Wires 4684 1656.

The Chairperson and the General Manager thanked the presenters for their engaging presentation. The General Manager advised that some information would be made available on Council's website.

Community Question/Statement Time

**COMMUNITY QUESTION/STATEMENT TIME**

In line with the Community Forum Guidelines matters must be submitted on the *Community Forum Question/Statement Form* in order to be addressed. The Record of Proceedings will only record the name of the person who raised the Question/Statement, who they represent and the topic discussed. Any additional documents handed in on the night will be noted. No verbal comments from the speaker will be documented.

A copy of all questions submitted by the cut off time is given to Councillors to consider regardless of whether they are addressed during the proceedings.

The Chairperson stated that Community Question/Statement Time is for matters that relate to items in Council's Ordinary Meeting Agenda. Reports are written by Council officers and reflect the views of the applicants' proposal, community views, legal aspects and where appropriate, comments.

All questions must be submitted in writing by 12 noon on the day of the Forum. There will be a maximum of 2 speakers for and against a matter with each speaker limited to 5 minutes.

The Chairperson reinforced that Community Forums are to provide information and to allow comment and are not a debate night. The Chairperson asked that speakers address them and Councillors on all occasions, to stay on the subject matter and avoid making personal remarks about individuals.

The General Manager, Luke Johnson read out the Executive Summary from the Council report for each agenda item discussed throughout the night.

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Ques 1 Donald Jones representing Self  
Matter raised – PE1 – Development Application for Multi Dwelling Houses – 56 & 58 Carlton Rd, Thirlmere

Mr Jones addressed the Forum.

TRIM 9004

Ques 2 Lorn & Karen Ryan representing Self  
Matter raised – PE3 – The Oaks North Planning Proposal

Mrs Ryan addressed the Forum.

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Record of Proceedings of the Community Forum held in the Council Foyer, 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton, on Monday 11 September 2017

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Community Question/Statement Time

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The Acting Director Planning responded on the night to advise that details in relation to the subdivision and fencing are addressed much later in the process.

Cr Lowry left the room due to a previously declared Conflict of Interest in the next Item.

TRIM 9362

Ques 3

Jeff Bulfin representing landowners  
Matter raised – PE4 – Darley Street, Planning Proposal

Mr Bulfin addressed the Forum.

Cr Lowry returned to the meeting at 7.33pm.

Community  
Question/Statement  
Time

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Informal Question/Statement Time

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**INFORMAL QUESTION/STATEMENT TIME**

In line with Council's Community Forum Guidelines matters must be submitted on the *Community Forum Question/Statement Form* in order to be addressed. The Record of Proceedings will only record the name of the person who raised the Question/Statement, who they represent and the topic discussed. Any additional documents handed in on the night will be noted. No verbal comments from the speaker will be documented.

A copy of all questions submitted by the cut off time is given to Councillors to consider regardless of whether they are addressed during the proceedings.

The Chairperson stated that this section of the Forum is for general issues which are not on the Council's current Ordinary Meeting Agenda.

All questions must be submitted in writing by 12 noon on the day of the Forum. There will be a maximum of 2 speakers for and against a matter with each speaker limited to 5 minutes.

TRIM 7884

Ques 1      Rowland Ware representing National Parks Association  
Matter raised – Protecting our rivers

Mr Ware addressed the Forum.

Additional documentation was handed in on the night.

TRIM 4985-9

Ques 2      John Gay representing Help Save Appin  
Matter raised – Macquariedale Road Appin Planning Proposal

Mr Gay addressed the Forum.

Additional documentation was handed in on the night.

Informal Question  
/Statement Time

Conclusion and Informal Discussions

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**CONCLUSION AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS**

The Chairperson thanked those present for attending, for the feedback provided and interest shown in the matters discussed. The Chairperson invited everyone to tea and coffee and to speak openly to Councillors about any matter they wish to raise.

The Community Forum closed at 7.47pm.

About 35 people present.

## WOLLONDILLY SHIRE COUNCIL

Record of Proceedings of the Community Forum held in the Council Foyer, 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton, on Monday 11 September 2017

### Your Councillors

#### YOUR COUNCILLORS

##### East Ward

Cr M (Matthew) Deeth

**Mobile: 0428 335 743**

Email: [matthew.deeth@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:matthew.deeth@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)

Cr N (Noel) Lowry

**Mobile: 0406 047 086**

Email: [noel.lowry@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:noel.lowry@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)

Vacant

##### Central Ward

Cr R (Robert) Khan  
**Deputy Mayor**

**Mobile: 0409 994 295**

Email: [robert.khan@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:robert.khan@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)

Cr M W (Michael) Banasik

**Mobile: 0425 798 068**

Email: [michael.banasik@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:michael.banasik@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)

Cr B (Blair) Briggs

**Mobile: 0418 269 913**

Email: [blair.briggs@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:blair.briggs@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)

##### North Ward

Cr M (Matt) Gould

**Mobile: 0427 936 471**

Email: [matthew.gould@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:matthew.gould@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)

Cr J A (Judith) Hannan  
**Mayor**

**Mobile: 0414 557 799**

Email: [judith.hannan@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:judith.hannan@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)

Cr S (Simon) Landow

**Mobile: 0415 406 719**

Email: [simon.landow@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au](mailto:simon.landow@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au)

Record of Proceedings of the Community Forum held in the Council Foyer, 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton, on Monday 11 September 2017

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Community Forum Dates

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**COMMUNITY FORUM DATES**

Community Forums will generally be held on the second Monday of each month and will commence at 6.30pm except in the case of a public holiday when it will be held on the second Tuesday.

Dates for upcoming Community Forums in 2017 are as follows:

- Monday 9 October 2017
- Monday 13 November 2017
- Monday 4 December 2017