

# **VicForests Instruction**

## **Koala Management**

**August 2015  
1.0**



Copyright © VicForests  
All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of VicForests.

## Document Information

### General Information

<b>File Path:</b>	J:\VICFORESTS\PUBLIC\SUST. FOREST. MAN. SYSTEM\ FOREST OPERATIONS MANUAL\WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS\APPROVED\VICFORESTS INSTRUCTION – KOALA MANAGEMENT			
<b>RecFind Ref:</b>				
<b>Description:</b>	This document outlines VicForests process for managing Koalas			
<b>Author:</b>	C. Powell			
<b>Creation Date:</b>	July 2015			
<b>Procedure Owner(s):</b>	Conservation Biologist			
<b>Current Version:</b>	1.0			
<b>Copy Number:</b>	1			
<b>Review Period:</b>	Last review date:	5/08/2015	Next review date:	5/08/2018

### Revision History

New Version	Revision Date	Author(s)	Old Version	Revision Notes

### Reviewers

<b>The following positions should review the instruction prior to any significant amendment being approved</b>
General Manager Planning Manager Forest Performance

### Approval

Approver	Position / Resolution	Date
Nathan Trushell	General Manager, Planning	
Signature:		

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Purpose</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Scope</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Risk</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Administration</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1 References	5
5.2 Definition	5
5.3 Appendices	5
5.4 Document Retention	5
5.5 Recordkeeping	5
<b>6. Procedure for the Management of Koalas</b>	<b>6</b>
6.1 Distribution	6
6.2 Habitat requirements	6
<b>7. Management strategy for the protection of resident Koala communities and individuals.</b>	<b>7</b>
7.1 Ongoing Protection of Resident Communities	8
7.2 Special Management Plan	8
<b>8. Appendix 1 VicForests' Koala Management Flowchart</b>	<b>9</b>

## 1. Purpose

This instruction outlines VicForests' approach to managing Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) individuals or communities. The objective of this Instruction is to outline the strategy for detecting and protecting Koala individuals or resident communities.

Although Koalas are not listed as threatened within Victoria there is a potential for individual and or resident communities to overlap with planned timber harvesting operations. Therefore in order to manage the risk of causing any injury to resident Koala communities, VicForests has developed the following Instruction.

This instruction recognises protection provided to the species through the current multi-layered regulatory framework (including the current reserve system and national parks). It is also recognised that in some cases, additional management actions may be required to manage the risk of causing any injury or displacement of resident Koala communities.

## 2. Background

In order to protect threatened species and their habitat, VicForests planning processes involve an extensive desktop and field assessment component to identify all relevant biodiversity values and ensure that the appropriate management prescriptions are implemented in line with current regulatory framework.

The Forest Management Planning framework in Victoria includes measures to conserve a range of significant biodiversity values in State forest. These measures complement the protection provided by the national park and conservation reserve system.

The management of State forest in Victoria is primarily determined by the relevant Forest Management Plans. Forest Management Plans are prepared for each Forest Management Area (FMA) or groups of FMAs. Forest Management Plans incorporate guidelines and prescriptions that apply in each FMA. The plans divide State forest into three zones:

- *Special Protection Zones* where the protection and management of identified or modelled biodiversity values is the principal objective.
- *Special Management Zones* where timber harvesting and key biodiversity values will be jointly managed using additional prescriptions for the harvesting of timber.
- *General Management Zones* where multiple use management is applied to produce timber and protect non timber values by the use of comprehensive prescriptions based on the Code of Practices for Timber Production (2007).

Protection of biodiversity values remains a key management objective within the above zoning schemes and all VicForests operations are carried out to comply with these requirements. In addition, VicForests further demonstrate precaution in its approach to threatened species and communities identification and protection, to ensure that all requirements of the regulatory framework are met, and in many cases, exceeded.

## 3. Scope

This document applies to proposed and approved coupes to which VicForests has access in accordance with the *Sustainable Forest (Timber) Act* (2004) and Community Forestry Operations under the *Forests Act* (1958), within the range of Koalas.

## 4.Risk

This Instruction addresses the following risks:

134. Forest values not identified during coupe marking

Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating
Possible	Moderate	Medium

As a guide, the review period should take into account the risk rating

Risk Rating	Review Period
Extreme	Every year
High	Every 2 years
Medium	Every 3 years
Low	Every 5 years

## 5.Administration

### 5.1 References

Crowther, M. S., Lunney, D., Lemon, J., Stalenberg, E., Wheeler, R., Madani, G., Ross, K. A and Ellis, M. (2014) Climate-mediated habitat selection in an arboreal folivore. *Ecography*. 37:336-343

Department of Sustainability and Environment (2004) *Victoria's Koala management strategy*. Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne.

Van Dyck, S and Strahan, R. (2008) *The Mammals of Australia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. New Holland Publishers, Sydney.

### 5.2 Definition

"coupe" means the operations area on which harvesting is to take place. Where 'Gross Coupe' means the entire planned area and 'Nett Coupe' is the area to actually be harvested

"DELWP" means the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning

"forest management system" means the electronic data storage system for all forest management information

"FMP" Forest Management Plan

### 5.3 Appendices

Appendix	Name / Description of Appendix
Appendix 1	Koala Management Flowchart

### 5.4 Document Retention

This Instruction should be retained for a minimum of 7 years after it is superseded by another version. If for clear business reasons the Instruction needs to be retained for a longer period of time, this needs to be stated clearly with justification.

### 5.5 Recordkeeping

Unless stipulated within this Instruction, documentation generated from this Instruction must be managed according to VicForests Records Management Policy and Procedures.

## 6. Procedure for the Management of Koalas

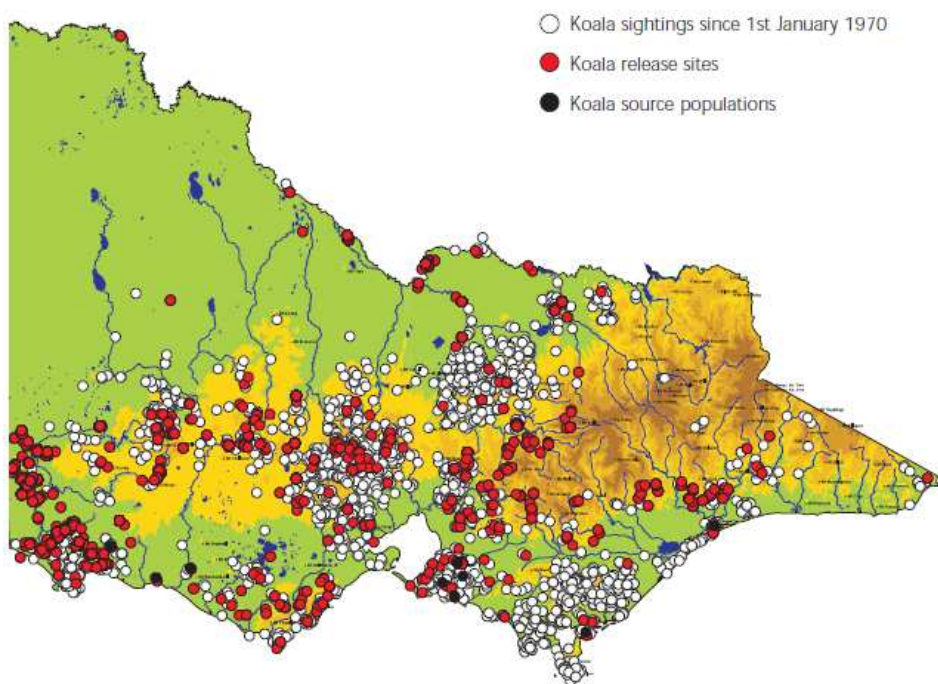
Koalas are Australia's largest arboreal marsupial, their average head and body length in males is 78cm and females in is 72cm, this species is characterised by grey woolly fur and a white-ish underbelly (Van Dyck and Strahan 2008).

### 6.1 Distribution

There is a relatively large and widespread population of Koalas in Victoria. This species is known to occur in eucalypt forests and woodlands where there is an average annual rainfall of around 500mm (DSE, 2004). Koala densities across most of Victoria are relatively sparse (<1 per ha), however, there are some high density populations located in parts of the Otway Ranges, Strathbogie Ranges, Mt Eccles National Park, Warrandyte State Park, French Island and Raymond Island (DSE, 2004).

As koalas are distributed across most of Victoria there is the potential for Koala populations to overlap with planned timber harvesting operations across the state. In particular, the Strathbogie Ranges has a high density resident population.

**Figure 1:** The distribution of Koala sightings in Victoria since 1970, Koala release sites, and the locations of populations that have been a source of Koalas for translocation. Data from Atlas of Victorian Wildlife, 2004. (from DSE's *Koala Management Strategy*, 2004, p.11)



### 6.2 Habitat requirements

Koalas inhabit a wide range of temperate, sub-tropical, woodland and semi-arid eucalypt communities across eastern Australia. This species has specific preferential feed tree species (listed below), while also being known to require shelter (non-food) trees with dense foliage, that have been found to be equally important for thermoregulation and cover for the species (Crowther *et al.* 2013).

**TREE SPECIES KNOWN TO BE EATEN BY WILD KOALAS IN VICTORIA** (from *DSE's Koala Management Strategy*, 2004, p.23)

\* - Preferred forage species in Victoria.

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Eucalyptus baxteri</i>	Brown Stringybark
<i>Eucalyptus bosistoana</i>	Coast Grey-box
<i>Eucalyptus botryoides</i>	Southern Mahogany
<i>Eucalyptus bridgesiana</i>	But But
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	* River Red-gum
<i>Eucalyptus camphora</i>	Mountain Swamp-gum
<i>Eucalyptus cephalocarpa</i>	Mealy Stringybark
<i>Eucalyptus cypellocarpa</i>	Mountain Grey-gum
<i>Eucalyptus dives</i>	Broad-leaved Peppermint
<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>	* Southern Blue-gum
<i>Eucalyptus goniocalyx</i>	Bundy
<i>Eucalyptus largiflorens</i>	Black Box
<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon</i>	Yellow Gum
<i>Eucalyptus macrorhyncha</i>	Red Stringybark
<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	Yellow Box
<i>Eucalyptus microcarpa</i>	Grey Box
<i>Eucalyptus muelleriana</i>	Yellow Stringybark
<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Messmate Stringybark
<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	* Swamp Gum
<i>Eucalyptus pauciflora</i>	Snow Gum
<i>Eucalyptus polyanthemos</i>	Red Box
<i>Eucalyptus radiata</i>	Narrow-leaved Peppermint
<i>Eucalyptus regnans</i>	Mountain Ash
<i>Eucalyptus rubida</i>	Candlebark
<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i>	Gippsland Red-gum
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	* Manna Gum

## 7. Management strategy for the protection of resident Koala communities and individuals.

Although Koalas are not listed as threatened within Victoria there is a potential for individual and/or resident communities to overlap with planned timber harvesting operations. Therefore in order to manage the risk of causing any injury to resident Koala communities VicForests will follow the below actions in areas approved for timber harvesting:

During the coupe planning stages, it must be determined if the proposed coupe is within a high density Koala population area – Otway Ranges, Strathbogie Ranges, Mt Eccles National Park, Warrandyte State Park, French Island and Raymond Island (DSE, 2004). If during coupe reconnaissance or at any stage during coupe planning, staff identify any of the preferred feed trees for this species (listed above: Southern Blue-gum, Swamp Gum, Manna Gum or River Red-gum) in high density population areas, a CENGEA alert is to be placed on the coupe and included on the coupe context map.

There are then a series of management options that VicForests will then consider:

- a) Conduct a pre-harvest survey for the species as per *VicForests Pre-harvest Survey Procedures*
- b) Contractors instructed to look/listen and check for fresh scats of Koalas prior to starting each days harvesting to specifically check the immediate area of operation.



Image 1. Koala Scat

What Scat is That (ABC Science) <http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2007/09/26/2044094.htm>

## 7.1 Ongoing Protection of Resident Communities

If an individual Koala or community of Koalas is detected then operations are to immediately be ceased in the vicinity of the detection. If a Koala is present in a tree within the coupe, operations must not take place within 1 tree length of the detection until the animal has safely moved away.

If a Koala is injured or orphaned, contact the Southern Ash Wildlife Centre on **(03) 5165 3583** immediately, VicForests staff or contractors are not to handle any animals. VicForests staff are required to contact VicForests Conservation Biologist for advice, if at any time they are unsure of the suitable management approach for any Koalas (or signs of their presence) detected.

Appendix 1 outlines the process of Koala management across VicForests operations as well as the responsibilities of both planning and operational staff.

## 7.2 Special Management Plan

If a resident Koala community is detected, a VicForests Special Management Plan (SMP) will be developed. The SMP will outline the management actions for the specified area required to protect the Koala community, and will be spatially represented within the VicForests Reserves Layer. This layer is a spatially referenced regulatory dataset that represents forested areas containing values that require protection during future planning, and operational activities.



## 8. Appendix 1 VicForests' Koala Management Flowchart

