

KOALA PROTECTION AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Whilst no koalas have been found on the site recently, the site has been found to contain some koala habitat. In the development and operation of the GBGC this habitat area will remain mostly untouched, and will, in fact, be expanded by approx. 0.5 hectare to ensure the habitat is protected and managed for the benefit and security of koalas who may traverse the site.

Current understanding

There is vegetation along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site, and on other parts in small areas, and these include koala habitat which is used by koalas when traversing the site.

Government mapping includes the site in areas that are identified as koala habitat, ecological land that provides habitat for threatened species, and regulated vegetation that contains high value regrowth. Further assessment of the site, including a Significant Impact Assessment and Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation referral will be undertaken by RQ.

RQ's solutions

The proposed GBGC is largely located on cleared and disturbed land outside the koala habitat on the site. RQ has taken expert advice on how best to protect koalas who may traverse the site and how to best manage the koala habitat on the site.

To achieve this RQ has followed the practice of:

- **Avoid**
Avoid the habitat where possible - careful consideration of environmental values on the site has guided the chosen design.
- **Minimise and mitigate**
Minimise and mitigate the impacts on the habitat - removal of vegetation will be largely avoided. Where vegetation is needed to be removed, cut and fill will be minimised where possible to ensure maximum retention and reduced impact on existing vegetation.

Where disturbance to existing vegetation cannot be avoided, the following mitigation outcomes are proposed:

- Infrastructure will be located having due regard to the retention of existing vegetation;
- Additional land in the vegetation buffer will be designated to ensure a 100m offset is achieved for the Swamp Tea-Tree habitat. This also reinforces the koala habitat;
- The majority of the existing mapped vegetation will be designated within vegetation buffer;
- Any likely impacts on the habitat will be mitigated, including koala exclusion fencing, fauna friendly lighting, controlled access, and road design.
- **Offset the impacts**
Offset the likely impacts caused by the project. This includes adopting expert recommendations for undertaking works on site as noted above, including the retention of a licenced koala spotter and fauna spotter/catcher.

A small section of identified core koala habitat is proposed to be removed. Other vegetation removal is also proposed elsewhere on the site, including a mix of planted and natural vegetation.

As the proposed GBGC seeks to achieve a no net loss of vegetation as a result of the development, an offset area of 0.52ha is proposed within the site. While further detailed site analysis will occur prior to the commencement of on-site works, it is recommended that this offset area could be located in the southern section of the site, adjacent to the existing vegetation buffer.

Benefits of this approach

- There are several practical benefits of this approach:
- The habitat area will be increased and consolidated;
 - The vegetation buffer will be managed for the protection of koalas;
 - The ease of movement for koalas traversing the site will be maintained;
 - Koalas will be protected with appropriate fencing and other measures.

To find out more information and share your thoughts on the GBGC Project:

Visit the website www.racingqueensland.com.au/gbgc

Email us at gbgc@racingqueensland.com.au