

Victorian Koala Management Strategy Implementation Plan

Version 2 – June 2024

Introduction

The Victorian Koala Management Strategy (VKMS) sets out actions to address issues affecting Victoria's koala populations and habitat over the next ten years. This document outlines the implementation plan for the actions in the VKMS.

Delivery phases

The implementation of the VKMS will be in phases.

Phase 1 refers to actions or specific deliverables that will commence delivery in years 1-3.

Phase 2 refers to actions or specific deliverables that will either commence in years 4+, or that rely on results from Phase 1 actions or deliverables and will commence following the completion of those actions or deliverables.

Monitoring the delivery of actions

Action 11.1 establishes an implementation working group who will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the delivery of the actions in the strategy.

Implementation plan updates

The information in this implementation plan is indicative and may be subject to change due to a range of factors such as the results of procurement processes, budget availability and government priorities. It is intended that this implementation plan will be a live document and will be updated by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) as needed throughout the life of the VKMS. The current version of the implementation plan will be available on the DEECA website at: https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/our-wildlife/koalas. Please ensure you are referring to the most recent version of the plan.

The indicative commencement date of some deliverables in this first version of the implementation plan relies on the outcome of procurement processes. Once the procurement processes have been completed and the timing of the deliverables has been agreed with the delivery partners, the implementation plan will be updated.



Theme 1 - Traditional Owners and koalas

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 1.1 Partner with Traditional Owners to undertake actions on Country that will benefit koalas or their habitat	1.1.1 Meet with Traditional Owners to discuss their priorities for Country and how these could benefit koalas or koala habitat.	DEECA Traditional Owners		Linked actions will be determined by Traditional Owner priorities	October 2021 (discussions commenced during development of VKMS)	Ongoing	1
Traide ide bet Co sim and det imp tha	1.1.2 Work with Traditional Owners to identify linkages between actions in Country Plans (or similar documents) and the VKMS and determine how to implement actions so that the goals of both the Country Plans and VKMS can be achieved.	DEECA Traditional Owners	Parks Victoria	Linked actions will be determined by Traditional Owner priorities	Ongoing	Ongoing	1
	1.1.3 Establish partnership arrangements with interested Traditional Owner groups to deliver relevant actions on Country.	DEECA Traditional Owners	Parks Victoria		Ongoing	Ongoing	1

	1.1.4 Work with Traditional Owners to build their capacity to deliver actions on Country that will benefit koalas or habitat.	DEECA Traditional Owners	Parks Victoria Universities TAFEs	Linked actions will be determined by Traditional Owner priorities	Ongoing	Ongoing	1
Action 1.2 Support Traditional Owner groups to protect culturally and environmentally significant areas from koala over-browsing	1.2.1 Meet with Traditional Owners to determine culturally and environmentally significant areas that may require protection from the impacts of overabundant koalas.	DEECA Traditional Owners	Parks Victoria	Action 2.1 - Implementing habitat monitoring and koala management programs Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring	Ongoing	Ongoing	1
koala over-browsing	1.2.2 Establish partnership arrangements with Traditional Owner groups to undertake koala management activities on Country including habitat and koala assessment and monitoring, and koala management program planning and delivery.	DEECA Traditional Owners	Parks Victoria	Action 2.1 - Implementing habitat monitoring and koala management programs Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring	Ongoing	Ongoing	1
	1.2.3 Work with Traditional Owners to build their capacity to undertake koala and habitat monitoring and koala management programs.	DEECA Traditional Owners	Parks Victoria Universities TAFEs	Action 2.1 - Implementing habitat monitoring and koala management programs Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring	Ongoing	Ongoing	1

Theme 2 - Koala overabundance

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 2.1 At key high- density koala population sites, undertake habitat monitoring to detect change in condition and implement evidence- based management	2.1.1 Identify sites with high- density koala populations.	DEECA	Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Universities Landholders/managers Blue gum industry	Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring	June 2023	Ongoing	1
programs to protect habitat and koala welfare	2.1.2 Use ARI's previous habitat health trigger work to develop a habitat monitoring program to detect changes in habitat health at sites prone to overabundance.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process		To be confirmed (TBC)	TBC	1
	2.1.3 Implement the habitat monitoring program at relevant sites.	DEECA	Universities Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Landholders/managers Blue gum industry		Will be determined based on completion date of 2.1.2	Ongoing, frequency to be determined by 2.1.2	1
	2.1.4 Develop an evidence- based framework for koala	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process,		July 2024	TBC	1

management programs that: - identifies trigger points for intervention prior to significant impacts on habitat or koala welfare occurring - identifies appropriate management interventions for different scenarios that consider habitat, land-use, carrying capacity, koala welfare, disease risk and genetic management - includes a standard protocol for data collection and management - includes a process for evaluating koala management programs - considers the development of regional koala management plans.		but input will be sought from: Vets Wildlife carers Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Landholders/managers Blue gum industry			
2.1.5 Develop a database to store data from management programs that will enable data sharing and data analysis to inform improvements to the koala management framework.	DEECA	Parks Victoria	TBC	TBC	1

2.1.6 Undertake koala management programs at high-density populations, as needed, in accordance with the framework.	DEECA	Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Vets Wildlife carers Landholders/managers Blue gum industry		Programs are ongoing but new framework will be used once finalised following completion of 2.1.4.	Ongoing	1
2.1.7 Undertake research into the causes of overabundance and the potential for novel contraceptive methods that have not been used in Victoria.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process	Action 4.1 - Genetic surveys	Phase 2 deliverable, timing TBC	Phase 2 deliverable, timing TBC.	2
2.1.8 Identify impacted sites and support re-vegetation projects at these sites.	DEECA	Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Landholders/managers Councils General public Community groups Landcare Catchment Management Authorities (CMA)	Action 6.2 - Support initiatives to increase the extent of koala habitat and improve habitat connectivity	TBC	TBC	1

			Non-government Organisations (NGO)				
Action 2.2 Revise the 2004 translocation protocol	2.2.1 Review the translocation protocol from the 2004 VKMS to determine what changes may be needed based on the outcomes of previous translocation programs and existing research into translocations. Identify additional information/data needed to develop a new translocation protocol.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process; input will be sought from: Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Universities Vets Wildlife carers		TBC	TBC	1
	2.2.2 Develop a new translocation protocol that considers: - minimum habitat requirements and habitat availability for release sites, including identifying areas of suitable habitat that can be used as release sites - expertise of personnel involved in the translocation - disease risk - genetics - selection of individuals for translocation - translocation methods including capture, handling,	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process; input will be sought from: Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Universities Vets Wildlife carers	This action requires data from: Action 4.1 - Genetic surveys Action 5.1 -Disease surveillance Action 6.1 -Decision support tool Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring.	TBC	TBC	2

transport and release requirements and equipment					
 post-release monitoring requirements 					
 data recording requirements 					
 community consultation requirements 					
 requirements for future planned burns near release sites 					
 guidance for relocation of koalas following bushfires. 					
2.2.3 Use the new translocation protocols to inform koala conservation and management activities.	DEECA Parks Victoria		Will be determined based on timeline for 2.2.2.	ТВС	2
	Traditional owners				

Theme 3 - Koala rehabilitation

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 3.1 Develop standards for koala rehabilitation to encourage a consistent, best practice approach to koala rehabilitation across the state.	3.1.1 Engage with vets, animal welfare experts, wildlife carers and Animal Welfare Victoria to finalise the standards of care for koala rehabilitation.	DEECA	Vets Zoos Victoria Animal welfare experts Wildlife carers Animal Welfare Victoria		Ongoing	Released August 2023 -	1
	3.1.2 Support opportunities for post-release monitoring to investigate the success of rehabilitation.	DEECA	Universities Zoos Victoria Wildlife carers Vets		TBC	TBC	1

Theme 4 - Koala genetics

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 4.1 Undertake state-wide genetic surveys of Victorian koala populations.	4.1.1 Develop a genetic survey program to better understand: - the genetic diversity of koala populations across Victoria - the significance and spatial boundaries of the unique Strzelecki/South Gippsland genome - whether other populations of genetic significance exist - the level of gene flow between populations - population structure - disease prevalence.	DEECA	Universities Vets	Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management (if citizen science is used). Results from this action will inform: Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol Action 4.2 - Genetic management plan. This action can potentially be implemented concurrently with: Action 5.1 - Disease surveillance Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring.	Commenced July 2023	Completed August 2023	1
	4.1.2 Implement the genetic survey program.	DEECA	Universities Vets	Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and	Commenced August 2023	Surveys completed June 2024.	

			Opportunistic samples (e.g. scats) for the program may be collected by: Vets Wildlife carers Traditional Owners Parks Victoria Landholders/managers Blue gum industry General public	management (if citizen science is used). Results from this action will inform: Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol Action 4.2 - Genetic management plan. This action can potentially be implemented concurrently with: Action 5.1 - Disease surveillance Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring.		Final results expected December 2024.	
Action 4.2 Develop a genetic management plan for Victorian koalas.	4.2.1 Develop a genetic management plan for Victorian koala populations, based on the results of the genetic surveys undertaken for action 4.1.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process	This action relies on data from Action 4.1 – Genetic surveys	Relies on data from Action 4.1. Timing TBC.	TBC	2
	4.2.2 Use the genetic management plan to inform koala conservation and management activities.	DEECA	Parks Victoria Traditional Owners		Will be determined based on the timeline for 4.2.1	TBC	2

Theme 5 - Koala disease

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 5.1 Develop and implement a systematic koala disease surveillance program across Victoria that will enable early detection of new diseases and ongoing monitoring of established diseases.	5.1.1 Develop and deliver a systematic koala disease surveillance program that includes clinical sign/syndromic reporting of koala health observations (which may trigger sample collection or field investigation), submission of samples for targeted disease testing and pathological examination of dead koalas.	DEECA	Universities Vets	This action can potentially be implemented concurrently with: Action 4.1 -Genetic surveys Action 7.1 - Koala population monitoring. This action will inform Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol	Commenced December 2023	December 2024	1
	5.1.2 Use the information gained through the disease surveillance program to inform koala conservation and management activities.	DEECA Parks Victoria Traditional owners		This action will inform Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol	January 2025	Ongoing	2

Action 5.2 Review the National Koala Disease Risk Analysis (DRA) to identify priority diseases, effective mitigation strategies and knowledge	5.2.1 Review the National Koala DRA to determine the priority diseases and effective mitigation strategies for Victoria.	DEECA	Universities Vets Australian Government	This action will inform Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol	TBC	TBC	1
gaps for Victoria.	5.2.2 Consider whether there are different factors in Victoria that may impact disease that were not considered in the National Koala DRA that warrant an additional DRA process to fill the knowledge gaps.	DEECA	Universities Vets		TBC	TBC	1
	5.2.3 Use the results of the DRA to inform koala conservation and management activities.	DEECA Parks Victoria Traditional owners			TBC	TBC	1

Theme 6 - Habitat conservation

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 6.1 Develop a comprehensive koala population and habitat decision support tool for Victoria to inform koala	6.1.1 Use the results of the koala population surveys in Action 7.1 to develop koala population distribution maps and population models.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process	This action relies on data from Action 7.1 – Koala population monitoring	This action relies on data from Action 7.1, timing TBC.	This action relies on data from Action 7.1, timing TBC.	2
and habitat management activities, including koala translocation programs, fire management and habitat protection and	6.1.2 Undertake koala habitat modelling to develop koala habitat maps and determine habitat availability.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process		This action relies on data from Action 7.1, timing TBC.	TBC	1
restoration.	6.1.3 Develop the decision support tool that can be used to identify: - priority areas of habitat for protection or restoration - potential climate refuge areas - koala populations at high risk of requiring management to protect habitat - potential translocation release sites.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process	This action relies on data from: Action 4.1 – Genetic surveys Action 5.1 – Disease surveillance Action 7.1 – Koala population monitoring	This action relies on data from Actions 4.1, 5.1 and 7.1, timing TBC.	This action relies on data from Actions 4.1, 5.1 and 7.1, timing TBC.	2
	6.1.4 Use the decision support tool to inform koala	DEECA		This action will inform Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol.	TBC	TBC	2

	conservation and management activities.	Parks Victoria Traditional Owners					
Action 6.2 Develop and support initiatives to increase the extent of koala habitat and improve habitat connectivity.	6.2.1 Identify areas where koala habitat should be increased, or habitat connectivity improved	DEECA	Councils Traditional Owners Parks Victoria Landholders/managers Blue gum industry General public Community groups Landcare CMAs NGOs	This action will be informed by (but is not reliant on): Action 2.1 – Implementing habitat monitoring and koala management programs Action 6.1 – Decision support tool.	TBC	TBC	1
	6.2.2 Work with Councils, CMAs, NGOs, Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria, landholders/managers, the Blue gum industry, community groups, Landcare and the community to develop and support initiatives to increase the extent of koala habitat and increase habitat connectivity.	DEECA	Councils Traditional Owners Parks Victoria Landholders/managers Blue gum industry General public Community groups	Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management	TBC	TBC	1

		Landcare CMAs NGOs				
6.2.3 Develop and provide information to landholders about how to increase koala habitat.	DEECA	Traditional Owners Parks Victoria Universities Councils General public Community groups Landcare CMAs	Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management	TBC	TBC	1

Theme 7 – Understanding populations

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 7.1 Establish a long-term state-wide monitoring program to improve knowledge of koala population	7.1.1 Develop a koala population monitoring program that complements the National Koala Monitoring Program (NKMP) and will survey koala populations throughout Victoria.	DEECA	Universities	This action can potentially be implemented concurrently with: Action 4.1 -Genetic surveys Action 5.1 -Disease surveillance.	Commenced July 2023	Completed August 2023	1

distribution, abundance and population trends.	7.4.2 Involvement the	PEEOV		This action will inform: Action 2.2 - Translocation protocol Action 6.1 – Decision support tool.			
	7.1.2 Implement the monitoring program across all land tenures where permission is granted.	DEECA	Organisation responsible for delivery of survey will be determined by procurement process. Other partners include: Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Landholders/managers Blue gum industry General public Community groups	Action 10.2 - Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management (if citizen science is used).	Commenced August 2023	Surveys completed June 2024. Final results expected December 2024.	1
	7.1.3 Use the results of the monitoring program to inform koala management programs and habitat protection and restoration activities.	DEECA Parks Victoria Traditional Owners			January 2025	Ongoing	1
	7.1.4 Publish the results of the monitoring program on the	DEECA	CSIRO		January 2025	January 2025	1

DEECA website and provide	Australian Government		
to the Australian Government			
for input into the NKMP.			

Theme 8 – Climate change and managing fire impacts

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 8.1 Use existing climate change models to better understand what a changed climate means for koalas and habitat across the whole of Victoria.	8.1.1 Identify existing climate change models that are relevant to koalas and koala habitat and determine if refinements to the models are needed.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process.		Phase 2 action, timing TBC	Phase 2 action, timing TBC	2
	8.1.2 Consider how the predictions from the models can be incorporated into koala management programs and habitat protection and restoration activities.	DEECA	Will be determined by procurement process.		Phase 2 action, timing TBC	Phase 2 action, timing TBC	2
Action 8.2 Use koala population data to inform planned burning activities and the wildlife welfare response during bushfires.	8.2.1 Use the koala population data obtained from Action 7.1 to inform: - planned burning activities - standard mitigations during planned burning activities, such as designation of wildlife welfare arrangements	DEECA	Parks Victoria Vets Wildlife carers	This action relies on data from Action 7.1 – Koala population surveys	This action relies on data Action 7.1, timing TBC.	This action relies on data from Action 7.1, timing TBC.	2

 the wildlife welfare 			
response initiated during			
bushfires			

Theme 9 - Koalas in blue gum plantations

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 9.1 Investigate options to manage koala populations in blue gum plantations that protect koala welfare and ensure the industry remains viable and can continue to operate.	9.1.1 Work with the blue gum industry to investigate options to manage koala populations in blue gum plantations. Factors that will be considered when investigating options include: - results of koala population surveys - habitat availability modelling - industry knowledge and experience - technology and infrastructure options available. - cost implications.	DEECA	Blue gum industry Universities	This action requires on data from Action 7.1 – Koala population surveys Action 6.1 – Decision support tool.	TBC	TBC	1-2 (Commences in phase 1 but relies on data from other actions)
Action 9.2 Investigate options to manage the impact of koala displacement on koala	9.2.1 Undertake research to better understand koala movement from plantations following harvesting and	DEECA	Blue gum industry Universities Landholders/managers		Phase 2 action, timing TBC	Phase 2 action, timing TBC	2

welfare and other values and incorporate them into management.	associated impacts on koala welfare and other values.		Wildlife carers Vets			
	9.2.2 Identify and assess options to manage the impacts identified under 9.2.1.	DEECA	Blue gum industry Universities Landholders/managers Wildlife carers Vets	Phase 2 action, timing TBC	Phase 2 action, timing TBC	2

Theme 10 – Community perception and socioeconomic significance

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 10.1 Develop and implement a community and stakeholder education and engagement program that promotes the VKMS and the issues it addresses.	10.1.1 Work with experts to develop an education and engagement program about the VKMS and the issues it addresses.	DEECA	Universities Vets Traditional Owners Wildlife welfare organisations Parks Victoria Wildlife carers Communication experts		June 2023	TBC	1

		Blue gum industry Councils Schools Community groups General public			
10.1.2 Implement the education program in the community.	DEECA	Parks Victoria Universities Vets Traditional Owners Wildlife welfare organisations Wildlife carers Communication experts Blue gum industry Councils CMAs Schools Community groups General public	TBC	Ongoing	1
10.2.1 Identify active	DEECA	Parks Victoria	June 2023	Ongoing	1

Action 10.2 Increase opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management.	community-based conservation and management programs and how they can be supported.		Traditional Owners Councils CMAs Landcare Community groups Landholders/managers General public			
	10.2.2 Identify new opportunities for community involvement in koala conservation and management activities.	DEECA	Parks Victoria Traditional Owners Councils CMAs Landcare Community groups Landholders/managers General public	July 2023	Ongoing	1
	10.2.3 Facilitate community involvement in these activities and support communities to conserve and manage koalas in their local area by providing information and support.	DEECA	Traditional Owners Parks Victoria Councils CMAs Landcare	July 2023	Ongoing	1

		Community groups			
		General public			
10.2.4 Develop and provide	DEECA	Traditional Owners	July 2023	Ongoing	1
information to the general community about how they		Parks Victoria			
help to conserve koalas.		Councils			
		CMAs			
		Landcare			
		Community groups			
		General public			

Implementation action

Action	Deliverable	Lead	Partners	Linked actions	Indicative commencement date	Indicative completion date	Delivery phase
Action 11.1 Establish a working group that includes government and non-government representatives to facilitate the delivery of	11.1.1 Identify government and non-government representatives to be part of a working group that will be responsible for: – assisting in the	DEECA	Potential group members: DEECA Traditional Owners		May 2023	Group established June 2023	1
actions in the VKMS and monitor its implementation.	development of a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework facilitating the delivery of		Parks Victoria Zoos Victoria				

	actions in the VKMS - monitoring the delivery of actions and progress towards the strategy's goals - publishing progress reports on the delivery of the strategy.		Animal Welfare Victoria Wildlife carers Wildlife welfare organisations Blue gum industry Melbourne Vet School Universities CMAs Local Government			
	11.1.2 Develop the terms of reference for the group and formally establish the group.	DEECA		May 2023	Group established June 2023	1
	11.1.3 Schedule and hold group meetings throughout the life of the strategy to monitor implementation of the VKMS.	DEECA	Group members	June 2023	Ongoing throughout the life of the VKMS	1
	11.1.4 Develop the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework for the strategy	DEECA	Group members	June 2023	August 2023	1
	11.1.5 Review progress towards delivering the	DEECA	Group members	First review 2025, future review	Ongoing	1

strategy's vision, goals and actions. Determine the priority actions for the next phase of delivery.			schedule will be determined by group		
11.1.6 Develop and publish reports about progress towards the delivery of actions under the VKMS on the DEECA website.	DEECA	Implementation working group members	First report will be published in 2025 following the 2- year review, future review schedule will be determined by group	Ongoing	1