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Subject: **Submission – Draft Koala Plan of Management (KPOM) – Motion CCL012-26**

Please see our official submission below regarding the Draft Koala Plan of Management.

Dear Mayor, CEO and Councilors,

Please find below the submission from the Woronora Valley Residents Association Inc. (WVRA Inc.) regarding the Draft Koala Plan of Management (KPOM) – Motion CCL012-26.

WVRA Inc. supports the KPOM and has provided recommendations to strengthen Koala protection, local hospital care, habitat preservation, SEPP inclusion, stakeholder engagement and Fire Trails/Wildlife Corridors, remain as emergency use only.

### **WVRA Inc. Submission – Draft Koala Plan of Management**

#### **1. Local Shire Koala Hospital, Recovery, and Potential Release Facility**

- WVRA Inc. strongly advocates a Shire-based koala hospital, recovery, and potential release facility serving Sutherland Shire and the Sydney Basin region.
- Currently, Port Stephens serves the Mid North Coast / Hunter region, and Camden serves Western Sydney / Macarthur.
- A Shire-based facility would provide timely, specialized care, long-term recovery, and monitored release.
- It would naturally integrate with University of Wollongong and Loftus TAFE, offering hands-on training and research opportunities.
- The University of Sydney Camden Campus Wildlife and Conservation Hospital received a \$4.5 million grant to expand capacity, demonstrating precedent for government-supported regional koala care.



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## 2. Education and Research Stakeholders (Section 2.3)

- University of Wollongong and Loftus TAFE must be formally recognised as stakeholders in the KPOM.
- They provide expertise in veterinary, zoology, and Indigenous studies, ensuring research, practical learning, and conservation outcomes.
- Their omission from the current stakeholder list is a significant gap that must be addressed.

## 3. Indigenous Knowledge and Fire Management

- Indigenous consultation must be embedded throughout the KPOM.
- First Nations expertise in wildlife behaviour, land management, and cultural burning practices is critical to koala survival.
- Fire management should include fire-resistant native trees that also provide food and shelter for koalas:
  - Lilly Pilly (*Syzygium smithii*)
  - Tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*)
  - Illawarra Flame Tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*)
  - Grey Gum (*Eucalyptus punctata*)
  - Swamp Mahogany (*Eucalyptus robusta*)
  - Black She-oak (*Casuarina glauca*)
  - Water Gum (*Tristaniopsis laurina*)
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## 4. Learning from the 2019–2020 Bushfires

- The bushfires resulted in the loss of an estimated 500 million animals.
- Issues highlighted include gaps in coordination, delays in treatment, and lack of local infrastructure.



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- Improved facilities, training, and coordination — including a local koala hospital — would enhance emergency response.
  - Diseases like chlamydia, burns, and vehicle injuries require immediate local care, improving survival rates.

## 5. Corridors and Connectivity (Section 2.6)

- Wildlife corridors may also function as fire trails.
- Some trails are critical wildlife corridors and must remain protected.
- The Crescent Fire Trail at Woronora links Woronora Heights, Woronora Valley, and Heathcote National Park.
- It functions as both a fire route and wildlife corridor.
- Must be restricted from temporary/private access, available only for emergencies.

## 6. Habitat Protection in Development Assessment

- Koala habitat and colonies must be a primary consideration in all development applications.
- Vegetation on this side of the river supports a healthy koala population and reduces disease like chlamydia.
- Protecting habitat is fundamental to koala survival.

## 7. SEPP Alignment and Support

- WVRA Inc. encourages Council to advocate for formal inclusion in the Koala SEPP.
- This provides access to grants and funding for protection, restoration, and conservation.
- We commend Council for following SEPP protocols proactively, even without formal inclusion.



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## Conclusion

“Healthy habitat, local care, and strong action — that is how we secure a future for our koalas.”

WVRA Inc. supports the Draft KPOM and recommends these measures to strengthen its impact and long-term success.

Yours sincerely,

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Sent from my iPhone