

CITY OF  
**BALLARAT**



Sustaining growth. Strengthening communities.



Your guide to  
living with koalas



The koala is one of Australia's most loved native animals. Despite their iconic status, the future of koalas in Australia and in Ballarat is not secure.

The majority of Ballarat's koalas live in and around Nerrina, Invermay and the Canadian Valley.

Where koalas live is known as koala habitat. As Ballarat's human population grows and the urban boundary continues to expand we encroach into areas of koala habitat

## What is koala habitat?

Koala habitat is made up of trees that serve three main functions: food, shelter and areas that the koala moves about in, known as corridors.

Koalas depend on eating leaves of native gum trees. In Ballarat koalas prefer the leaves from two main eucalypt trees: Manna Gum and Messmate Stringybark.

Koalas eat other eucalypts and use other trees and shrubs for shelter, for example wattles such as Blackwoods.

Corridors are treed areas linking patches of bush. The more vegetated the corridor, the less likely the koala needs to come down to the ground to move around its territory and the safer the koala is.

## Survival of Ballarat's koalas

**Urban expansion and development threatens the survival of Ballarat's koalas because:**

- removing native vegetation takes away the koala's habitat;
- new houses, roads and fences restrict the koala's ability to move around its habitat; and
- less native vegetation means koalas come down to the ground more – putting them in contact with two of their biggest threats; vehicles and dogs.





## **Council is safeguarding Ballarat's koalas**

Working in partnership with the Australian Koala Foundation, the City of Ballarat prepared a Koala Plan of Management for Ballarat and applied a control locally known as the Koala Overlay in the Ballarat Planning Scheme, aimed at safeguarding the long-term survival of the koala.

## **What is the Koala Overlay?**

The Koala Overlay applies to areas in Ballarat that have been identified as containing significant, preferred or important koala habitat. It aims to maintain and improve koala habitat by ensuring development avoids the unnecessary removal of native vegetation that koalas rely on for food, shelter and safe movement. The overlay also seeks to improve the koala's ability to move around its habitat by encouraging the building of fences that koalas can climb over, through or under.

### **Is my property in the Koala Overlay?**

You can find out if your property is in the Koala Overlay by creating a Planning Property Report at <http://services.land.vic.gov.au>

To find out more information on the Koala Overlay contact Council's Statutory Planning unit on 5320 5640.

### **My property has few trees, why is it in the Koala Overlay?**

Safeguarding the koala is not just about preserving native trees. Areas between patches of bush form part of the koala's habitat as they use these areas when moving around their territory. To protect the koala, all properties in a koala habitat must be included in the Koala Overlay.



### **My property is in the Koala Overlay, do I need planning approval?**

Planning approval is required if you wish to:

- remove native trees;
- build a fence; and
- subdivide land.

If you are considering developing your property, try to avoid having to remove native vegetation. If you cannot avoid removing native vegetation, consider how you can minimise its removal. One way to keep removal to a minimum is by locating buildings away from intact areas of native vegetation.

### **My property is in the Koala Overlay and I want to remove native vegetation, what must I do?**

You will need to seek planning approval from Council. When seeking approval you will need to identify on a plan the native vegetation you wish to remove and describe its type, number and size.

Depending on the number of trees you wish to remove, you may need to show what steps you will take to safeguard koala habitat. In some circumstances you may also be required to engage a qualified ecologist to help show you ways to protect koala habitat. This could include planting parts of your property with the types of trees that koalas eat and use for shelter.

### **Contact Council**

Before carrying out works or preparing plans for a property in the Koala Overlay, contact Council's Statutory Planning unit for permit information. Council's website also contains Koala Overlay permit information under the 'Statutory Planning' section at [www.ballarat.vic.gov.au](http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au)





# What can I do to help safeguard the koala?

If we continue to remove koala habitat and create barriers that restrict their movement, Ballarat's koala population will continue to decline.

By taking some simple actions you can help safeguard the koala and increase their population. The following actions will encourage the koala and native species to return to your backyard:

- plant trees that koalas eat, such as Manna Gums;
- plant trees that koalas use for shelter, such as wattles;
- keep fencing to a minimum, preferably none at all;
- build a koala friendly fence, if a fence is necessary; and
- modify existing fences to make them koala friendly.

## What is a koala friendly fence?

A koala friendly fence is one that koalas can easily climb over, through, or under, allowing them to move freely around their habitat.

The most common types of koala friendly fencing include post and rails and post and wire (no barbed wire).

## How do I modify an existing fence or wall to make it koala friendly?

Many existing fences and walls cannot be climbed by koalas, such as those made of colorbond, corrugated iron, brick, stone or vertical railings. These types of fences can be easily modified.

Simply fix a timber post on each side of the fence. Make sure the posts are located opposite each other, measure a minimum of 10cm in diameter and extend up to 20cm above the fence. This will allow koalas to climb up, over and down the fence. If a post is placed on only one side, koalas will not be able to climb safely down the other side.

Make sure you discuss any plans to modify your fence with your neighbour before carrying out any works.

Building a koala friendly fence will greatly increase the chances of you spotting a koala in your neighbourhood.



# Dogs and koalas do not mix

Roaming domestic dogs pose a significant threat to koalas.

Dog attack is one of the leading causes of death in koalas. Not only do dog attacks kill koalas, but a koala can also die from stress caused by being chased or being injured.

## **I own a dog, what can I do to reduce the threat to koalas?**

The best way to reduce the threat to koalas is to provide a dog run for your dog. A dog run is a fenced enclosure that keeps a dog secure. A dog run will keep your dog away from koalas and koalas away from your dog.

## **Where should a dog run be located on my property?**

A dog run must not be built around trees that koalas eat as koalas will climb inside the dog run to get to the trees. Ideally, a dog run should be positioned as far away as possible from any trees.

## **How should a dog run be fenced?**

Your dog run should be enclosed by a fence that keeps not only your dog in, but koalas out. This can be achieved by constructing a high solid fence out of material that koalas find difficult to climb, such as colorbond, corrugated iron or vertical railings.

## **No Dog Areas**

In some areas within the Koala Overlay the keeping of dogs is not allowed. If you live in an area where dogs are not allowed this restriction will be registered on the title of your land. This restriction is enforced by Council.





Koala friendly trellis fence

Build koala friendly fencing

Make your fence koala friendly

Retain and plant trees

Keep koalas safe from your dog

# Peter and Louise Martin with children, Ben, Tim, Sam and Hannah

**Peter and Louise have lived on their two acre block in Canadian with their four children for 14 years. Their home is situated in the Canadian Valley adjacent to the Sparrow Ground Reserve. Peter has used his experience as a landscape gardener to care for koalas and koala habitat surrounding his family's property.**

*"Despite being located just outside the Koala Overlay, our family is committed to doing what we can for koala conservation. Previously a dairy farm without any native trees, we have worked hard to revegetate the property. When we first moved here we removed the existing gorse and weeds and planted a variety of tree species along the creek line. The trees, most of which are Manna Gums, are now several metres high and we have already sighted a number of koalas in the area."*

*"Much of our property is unfenced, providing koalas with free access to our property and the surrounding properties from Sparrow Ground Reserve. We have planted dozens of koala habitat trees around the unfenced areas of our property including species such as Manna Gum, Red Gum and Messmate. Our Belgian Shepherd dog Kaya is fenced securely in an 800m<sup>2</sup> dog run which is located well away from any koala habitat trees."*

*Together the kids have made nestboxes for wildlife and put these in the newly planted trees. So not only do we see the odd koala, but we often have parrots and possums in the nesting boxes and kangaroos, echidnas and native ducks wandering freely around our property, providing much pleasure for our entire family."*





## **Further information and helpful contacts:**

### **Other planning controls**

There may be other controls that apply to your property that require you to obtain planning approval before removing or lopping certain types of vegetation. Please contact Council's Statutory Planning unit on 5320 5640 for further information.

### **Building permits**

A building permit is required for certain works. Contact Council's Building unit on 5320 5650 for further information.

### **Australian Koala Foundation**

This principal non-profit, non-government organisation is dedicated to the conservation and management of the koala and its habitat. For more information about the foundation and how you can help protect the koala visit their website [www.savethekoala.com](http://www.savethekoala.com)



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