1. The State Government has introduced measures with the aim of protecting koala populations, mainly through the long term protection of koala habitats across South East Queensland (SEQ).
2. Data collected from surveying and monitoring has been used to inform an independent report commissioned by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and prepared by Uniquest.
3. This report has identified that, despite the planning controls and programs that have been in place over the past 20 years, koala populations are continuing to decline.
4. The recent reclassification of koala being vulnerable across Queensland suggests that the current focus of attention and State Government investment is in need of review.
5. A response to the koala population survey has been developed that includes a suite of initiatives, including continuing to support local governments in coastal SEQ to implement koala conservation in their communities.
6. The response consists of a number of options that will be reviewed by external experts to provide advice on the most appropriate and realistic actions.
7. The options include continued survey and monitoring and complementary research initiatives.
8. Key koala population precincts in the SEQ hinterland will also be identified, protected and enhanced as the primary strategy to ensure the long term presence of wild koala populations.
9. The continued need for survey information across all of SEQ is critical as development pressures continue to negatively impact habitat and introduce threats. Mapping and modelling of koala habitats and surveying of koalas will also continue to provide data on habitat quality and population trends and health.
10. In developing a new strategy for koala conservation across SEQ and Queensland in general, it is critical that lessons are learnt from both past initiatives and opportunities for continuous improvement from current initiatives. There are also many credible institutes conducting high quality research in koala conservation and the outcomes of this research will be compatible with this strategy.
11. While the experts review the proposed options, other immediate actions will be implemented to provide public confidence that the Government is taking the protection of koalas in SEQ seriously.
12. These immediate actions include surveying and monitoring in the SEQ hinterland to provide additional information about koala numbers and distribution, and establishing two supported koala precincts in coastal SEQ. These precincts will be intensively supported to guarantee the continued presence of koalas in the coastal fringe.
13. Cabinet endorsed that the Uniquest report – South East Queensland Koala Population Modelling Study be publicly released.
14. *Attachments*
* [Uniquest report - South East Queensland Koala Population Modelling Study](Attachments/Study.PDF)