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To whom it may concern,

Narla Environmental was engaged by Colliers on behalf of Schools Infrastructure NSW to determine whether the proposed works at the Mona Vale Public School, Waratah Street, Mona Vale 2103 (hereafter referred to as the Subject Site), would impact upon “Core Koala Habitat” as defined by the State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2020 (Koala SEPP). As Koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) are listed as Vulnerable under both the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act (2016) and the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999), Narla understands that this assessment was required by Northern Beaches Council to address any concerns surrounding potential impacts to core habitat as a result of the proposed works.

The aim of this assessment was to identify any development assessment requirements that may apply pursuant to the Koala SEPP.

Background to the Koala SEPP

The State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) 2020 commenced on 30 November 2020 to replace and repeal the State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat protection) 2019 (2019 Koala SEPP). The Koala SEPP 2020 replicates the objectives and provisions of SEPP 44, which was in force from 1995 through to 2019.

The SEPP:

- Provides a framework for councils to prepare a strategic koala plan of management that would apply to the whole or part of a local government area.
- Applies to development applications on land over one hectare in a relevant LGA.
- Requires development applications to be consistent with a council strategic koala plan of management that applies to the land, or, if there is no strategic plan, sets out a two-step process to determine if the land is core koala habitat and if it is, produce an Individual Koala Plan of Management before council can grant consent to a development application.
- Exempts clearing of vegetation from the application of the SEPP if the purpose of the clearing is to maintain an Asset Protection Zone as part of rebuilding a dwelling destroyed or damaged by bushfire and allows the dwelling to be sited anywhere on the lot.
- Saves all Koala Plans of Management approved under SEPP 44 and 2019 Koala SEPP.

Council areas where the SEPP applies:

Armidale Regional, Ballina, Bathurst Regional, Bega Valley, Bellingen, Berrigan, Blayney, City of Blue Mountains, Bourke, Brewarrina, Byron, Cabonne, City of Campbelltown, Central Coast, Central Darling, Cessnock, Clarence Valley, City of Coffs Harbour, Coonamble, Dungog, Edward River, Eurobodalla, Federation, Forbes, Gilgandra, Glen Innes Severn Shire, Goulburn Mulwaree, Greater Hume Shire, Gunnedah, Gwydir, City of Hawkesbury, Hilltops, Hornsby, Inverell, Kempsey, Ku-ring-gai, Kyogle, City of Lake Macquarie, Leeton, City of Lismore, City of Lithgow, City of Liverpool, Liverpool Plains, Lockhart, City of Maitland, Mid-Coast, Mid-Western Regional, Moree Plains, Murray River, Muswellbrook, Nambucca Valley, Narrabri, Narrandera, Narromine, City of Newcastle, Northern Beaches, Oberon, Parkes, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Port Stephens, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Richmond Valley, City of Shoalhaven, Singleton, Snowy Monaro Regional, Snowy Valleys, Tamworth Regional, Tenterfield, Tweed, Upper Hunter Shire, Upper Lachlan Shire, Uralla, City of Wagga Wagga, Walcha, Walgett, Warren, Warrumbungle Shire, Weddin, Wentworth, Wingecarribee, Wollondilly, City of Wollongong and Yass Valley..

However, the SEPP does not apply to land dedicated, reserved or acquired under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 or to land dedicated under the Forestry Act 1916 as a State forest or flora reserve.

Does the SEPP apply to the proposed development?

The development control provisions of the SEPP apply to the proposed development because:

- There is no approved KPoM for the land.
- The Site Area is located within the Northern Beaches Council which is a Local Government Area (LGA) to which this SEPP applies.
- The Site Area has an area greater than 1 ha.

The development assessment process under the SEPP

The development assessment process under the Koala SEPP is a three (3) step process depending on the Koala Habitat present within the Project Site.

- **Step 1** - is the land Potential Koala Habitat?
 - Potential Koala Habitat means areas of native vegetation where trees of the types listed in Schedule 2 constitute at least 15% of the total number of trees in the upper or lower strata of the tree component.
- **Step 2** - is the land Core Koala Habitat?
 - Core Koala Habitat means an area of land with a resident population of koalas, evidenced by attributes such as breeding females, being females with young, and recent sightings of and historical records of a population.
- **Step 3**—Can development consent be granted in relation to core koala habitat?

A desktop assessment was undertaken by Narla Environmental to investigate whether the Subject Site contains Core Koala Habitat (**Table 1**). Details of the tree species within this site was collected from ArborSafe (2019).

Table 1. Development Assessment Process under the SEPP.

Steps	Habitat within the Subject Site
Step 1 - is the land Potential Koala Habitat?	Yes. Utilising the tree data within the ArborSite Visual Tree Assessment Report (ArborSafe 2019), it was determined that approximately 30% of the trees located within the Subject Site were comprised of tree species listed under Schedule 2 of the SEPP. Therefore, based on the native vegetation within the Subject Site meets the SEPPs definition of Potential Koala Habitat.
Step 2 - is the land Core Koala Habitat?	<p>No. Utilising the BioNet Threatened Species Search (DPIE 2021), the closest Koala record to the Subject Site was approximately 280m from the north-eastern boundary, recorded in 1971. There are no historical records listed within a 2.5km buffer of the Subject Site in the last 49 years, with the most recent in this area being recorded in 1971.</p> <p>A sighting of a Koala was recorded in 2020, approximately 5kms from the Subject Site, within Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. The habitat within the Subject Site is in a heavily urbanised landscape surrounded by residential buildings and active roads which would make it highly unlikely to be utilised by this individual, when compared to the heavily vegetated National Park in which it was found. Furthermore, no mention was made of young being present with the most recent siting, indicating that it was more likely a lone individual which does not constitute a resident population as defined by the SEPP.</p> <p>For these reasons it is deemed that the habitat within the Subject Site does not qualify as Core Koala Habitat.</p>
Step 3 —Can development consent be granted in relation to core koala habitat?	The Habitat within the Subject Site does not constitute Core Koala Habitat therefore, Development Consent can be granted in relation to the SEPP.

Assessment results

Whilst the habitat within the Subject Site does qualify as Potential Koala Habitat under the SEPP. The lack of recent proximal records indicating a resident population means that it does not meet the listing criteria of 'Core Koala Habitat'. Therefore, Council is not prevented, because of the SEPP, from granting consent to the development application.

Sincerely,



Chris Moore
Project Manager/ Ecologist
Narla Environmental

References

ArborSafe (2019) ArborSite Visual Tree Assessment Report for Mona Vale Public School

Department of Planning (2020) State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection)

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) (2021) BioNet. The website of the Atlas of NSW Wildlife
<http://www.bionet.nsw.gov.au/>



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