



Koala Action Gympie Region Inc.
Strategic Directions
2021 – 2024

Introduction

Following our group meeting on **5 September 2020**, where members came together to talk about what we saw as the future directions for KAGR, we decided that we would produce a formal strategic plan. It is hoped that this will guide our future planning. This plan sets out our strategic direction for the next 3 years and should be reviewed by the group at the end of 2024.

Our early group was formed in 2015 by concerned residents, all of whom had koalas on their properties. This group became a public voice for the koalas in the community. The group was initially auspiced by the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) who got us up and running with administration assistance and advice.

In January 2020 we incorporated and are now formally called Koala Action Gympie Region Inc (KAGR). We are a "Not For Profit" organisation run solely by volunteers. As we are no longer auspiced by MRCCC we operate without any premises and with limited equipment which is located at various places belonging to our members. We use various public facilities for our office use.

Our Objectives

Our initial objectives were:

- Collect information and data on the region's koala populations
- Foster public awareness of koalas, the pressures they face and what we can do to help them
- Initiate activities that promote koala conservation

On incorporation we altered our objectives to:

- Engage the community in contributing observations on Gympie region's koala population to better understand and help the species
- Increase public awareness of koalas as a vulnerable species through education and community engagement
- Initiate and support activities that reduce harm to koalas and that maintain and improve their habitat in our region
- Work collaboratively with and provide input to key stakeholders, both in government and the private sector, to improve the protection of koalas and their habitat for their long-term sustainability

Our Vision

Community Guardianship of our koalas and their environment.

Our Mission Statement

To ensure healthy Gympie Region koala populations in the wild for the long term through creating a "Koala-aware Community".

Strategic Objectives

1. Strengthen and protect koala habitat within the boundaries of Gympie Regional Council area
2. Increase awareness of koalas through education and community engagement
3. Strengthen collaborations with relevant stakeholders
4. Future-focused, sustainable organisation development

Action Areas

- Habitat Improvement
- Community Awareness and Education
- Collaboration
- Organisational Sustainability

Action Area 1 [Habitat Improvement]

Driving Statement:

The organisation will be the voice for koalas in the protection of koala habitat, including corridors, and re-establishment of habitat to ensure that koalas continue to survive and thrive in the Gympie region.

We will achieve this objective by:

- Educating the community regarding the critical need to protect existing habitat and prevent further fragmentation
- Regeneration of koala habitat on private property to create connecting corridors
- Monitoring real estate and change of use developments in the region
- Ensuring the data bases and mapping is kept up to date
- Provide relevant feedback to council on planning matters

We will know we are achieving this when:

- Enquiries about habitat plantings are increasing
- Numbers of private landholders interested in regenerating/expanding koala habitat are growing
- Numbers of habitat plantings are increasing
- Reported sightings are coming from new/different areas and are rising
- Council policies are permanently adapted to recognise the presence of koalas in the region and the importance of protecting their habitat
- Local developments are required to provide corridors for koala movement and the retention of vital koala habitat.

Action Area 2 [Community Awareness and Education]

Driving Statement

We will continue to increase awareness within the community on the presence of koalas and their needs.

We will achieve this objective by:

- Continuing to hold regular stalls at local festivals
- Regular posts on Facebook
- Pop-up road signs
- Interpretative signs in parks
- Our Webpage
- Regular articles in local print media
- Distribution of brochures accessible throughout the region
- Education workshops and forums including at, or in conjunction with, other groups
- Investigating opportunities to increase contact with local schools to educate children
- Targeted mail drops
- Sharing relevant information with local businesses and groups
- Improved signage in the area particularly on main roads

We will know we are achieving this when:

- There are Increased contacts from the public
- We receive requests for us to speak at various events
- Feedback via facebook
- Increased membership
- Feedback from other organisations about the work we are doing

Action Area 3 [Collaboration]

Driving Statement:

For the long-term well-being of our local koala population it is essential that we build partnerships with other groups and governments at all levels.

We will achieve this objective by:

- Partnering with community groups when necessary to organise and promote larger projects such as habitat corridors
- Working with TMR for various mitigation measures on our local main roads, in particular hotspots where multiple fatalities have occurred
- Working with council to recommend appropriate mitigation measures on council managed roads
- Educating drivers including bus and truck drivers on koala-aware driving via brochures, visits to businesses etc.
- Continuing to work with council on matters of planning involving koala habitats

- Providing comment to council on draft policies that impact on the koala population
- Being a voice for Gympie Region koalas with a range of relevant stakeholders
- Developing a relationship with the University of Sunshine Coast for furthering research into all aspects of koala well-being in the Gympie Region
- Applying for larger grants with partners where possible

We will know we are achieving this when:

- KAGR is regularly invited to participate in community events
- Hot spots on main roads are recognised by TMR and effective mitigation measures are undertaken by them to reduce koala road fatalities
- Council seeks KAGR's input when considering matters which will impact on koalas
- KAGR regularly works on koala-related projects in collaboration with other community groups
- Signage is improved particularly along main roads and reduction in speed limits in hot spots
- We see a reduction in fatalities by vehicle strikes and dog attacks.

Action Area 4 [Organisational Sustainability]

Driving Statement:

The organisation will work on ensuring its long-term viability and visibility in the region.

We will achieve this objective by:

- Reviewing the structure
- Increasing membership
- Investigating registration with ACNC to become a charitable organisation able to receive tax deductible donations
- Investigating grant opportunities for larger projects and improved funding
- Raising the profile of KAGR
- Developing good records and retention management
- Implementation and review of this 3 year strategic plan
- Consider having a centrally located storage shed available to keep all assets readily available once we start to acquire more assets

We will know we are achieving this when:

- Numbers of active members are increasing
- Involvement of members is growing with many more being active within the committee or contributing to working groups
- Membership includes younger community members who are active within KAGR
- KAGR is recognised as a regular contributor to local newspapers and bulletins/magazine
- Plantings are better attended and people come to us wanting to be involved with koala habitat