

26 February 2020

The Hon Rob Stokes MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

via online upload

Dear Minister,

Koala Habitat Protection SEPP

The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW is the peak body representing the interests of the urban development industry in New South Wales. We represent over 500 member companies that are directly involved in the industry including developers, ecologists, planners and lawyers.

We are writing to raise concerns around the introduction of State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) Koala Habitat Protection which will replace SEPP 44 – Koala Habitat Protection (SEPP 44).

UDIA NSW appreciates that there are many sensitivities about the status of koalas, which have been heightened following the recent bushfires. We believe that there should be a concerted effort to preserve habitat for koalas. This habitat preservation should be in locations where koalas have been observed/proven to reside, and in locations with trees which koalas actually feed-upon (feed trees).

UDIA is concerned that the review of SEPP 44 had been stagnant since March 2017, and there was insufficient industry consultation on the introduction of this new Koala Habitat Protection SEPP. While we share the concerns in relation to koala habitat preservation, we believe it is inappropriate for Government to pursue policy changes with inadequate consultation.

We are particularly concerned about the increase of koala feed tree species from 10 to 123. The koala habitat mapping should reflect areas that have had recent koala habitation. Currently the mapping is too broad, and we believe identifies inappropriate locations such as Breakwall Holiday Park in Port Macquarie as core koala habitat.

UDIA is hopeful that the supporting Guideline to the SEPP provides further clarity as to the pathway to enable development and growth under the new SEPP, while managing the sensitivities around koalas. The Guidelines are currently not released. However, we are meeting on Friday, 28 February with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to discuss this matter further.

UDIA NSW would like to collaborate with your Department on delivering a sensible approach to koala management, which allows koalas to thrive alongside urban growth across the State.

We seek to engage more closely throughout this process, and ask that you contact Mr Sam Stone, Manager, State Policy and Government Relations on 0401 213 899 or ssstone@udiansw.com.au to make arrangements for meaningful industry consultation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Mann', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steve Mann
Chief Executive