

## SNAPSHOT OF ECOLOGIST OPINION / ADVICE – TWEED COAST KOALAS

**National Parks & Wildlife Service** [25/9/2002]: 'recommended that this (Black Rocks) sports field be located outside of the subject site...to maintain the integrity of the wildlife corridor and significant koala habitat which would be severed by the proposed access road and infrastructure to the proposed sports field. It would also create human disturbance in this area...'

**Ecologist Sandy Pimm** [5/12/2013]: 'The Pottsville Wetlands / Black Rocks koala sub-population is critical to the survival of the koala on the Tweed Coast.'

**Koala expert & ecologist Dr Steve Phillips** [30/9/2014]: 'Of all the nodes and linkages that were identified by the (Tweed Coast Koala) Habitat Study 2011, the Black Rocks locality is one – if not the most – important...because the site supports a resident koala population that is also the southernmost currently known to occur along the Tweed Coast.'

**Dr Phillips** [30/9/2014]: 'The increasing development pressure being placed on the sports field locality is paramount to an abrogation of Council's responsibilities to koala conservation in the Tweed.'

**Dr Phillips** [30/9/2014]: 'It has long been my view that the sports field area should be rehabilitated because of its location and importance as a central hub for koala movement.'

**Ecologist John Callaghan** [10/6/2015]: 'If the Tweed Coast koala population is to be afforded a realistic chance for survival and recovery over the longer term, a precautionary approach will be necessary and the future of each remaining koala will be critical.'

**Dr Phillips** [24/2/2016]: 'Koalas have recently been confirmed as responding adversely to loud noise, in some instances departing from their known home range areas. The implications of this behaviour can result in elevated stress response manifesting in disease, joey mortality and death by misadventure. Photographic and veterinary evidence compiled by the local community indicates that koalas in the vicinity of the Black Rocks sports field already have higher levels of clinical expression of disease than do their counterparts in other population cells east of the Pacific Highway.'

**Dr Phillips** [21/3/2016]: 'The sports field (including the road reserve) offers an edge of approximately 1600m that is exposed to ongoing disturbance events and the depredations of domestic dogs. The small koala population that now survives in the habitat surrounding the sports field certainly does not need more disturbance, it needs to be left in peace, nurtured and allowed (or even assisted) to recover to more sustainable levels. Revegetating the sports field will remove that 1600m edge and create an ecologically important habitat block that will make a meaningful contribution to the recovery needs of the Tweed Coast koala population.'