

Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade (SSI)

Section 10 of this upgrade will put a new motorway 12 km through the middle of the area occupied by a Key koala population identified by a recent Biolink study(1). The proposed route will, separate 3 areas of known koala activity. This could have a devastating impact on not only the local population, but on other populations as this has been the proposed as the source population for Northern Rivers koalas.

The ameliotory measures listed for section 10 in Appendix C are insubstantial in the light of the Biolink field study.

1. Flopy top koala exclusion fencing is needed for all of Setion 10 as the entire length is within the proposed EPBC “important population” boundary [see Figure 6.1 in the draft report (1)].
2. Koala underpasses 2.4m x 2.4m are needed every 300m.
3. The fencing and underpasses need to be inspected regularly.

The Wardell by-pass, Section 10 of the upgrade, takes a huge detour into the Blackwall Range. This will impact on the last viable population of the Long-nosed Potoroo in the Far North Coast (2). Other threatened species will be affected. If the real reason for this route is to obtain road base material (schist) at the expense of threatened species, it will make a mockery of the EP& A Act and the EPBC Act.

This is the wrong route for this section of the Highway. The route of section 10 needs to be reassessed in the light of the Biolink Koala study.

- (1) Draft Koala Habitat and Population Assessment: Ballina Shire Council LGA. Steve Phillips (steve@biolink.com.au).