

Submission  
No 40

**INQUIRY INTO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION  
AMENDMENT (BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS SCHEME) BILL  
2024**

**Organisation:** Save Sydneys Koalas

**Date Received:** 8 September 2024

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# SAVESYDNEYSKOALAS



## Save Sydney's Koalas Submission to The Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Biodiversity Offsets Scheme) Bill 2024 Upper House Inquiry 2024.

According to the NSW Koala Strategy (2022: p21) the koalas in the Campbelltown LGA are the largest chlamydia-free koala population in New South Wales.

Save Sydney's Koalas (SSK)'s goal is to secure the continued growth of the Koala population in Sydney's southwest - the largest recovering Koala population in NSW, in a state where Koalas are predicted by become extinct in the wild by 2050.

Save Sydney's Koalas believes that the Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Biodiversity Offsets Scheme) Bill 2024 does not adequately address the concerns raised by either the NSW Auditor General , conservation groups or indeed, the independent review into the Act.

The current Act is not meeting its primary purpose to maintain a healthy and resilient environment, now and into the future, we believe the proposed reforms will also fail to do so.

**Fundamentally, the very concept of offsets undermines the value conservation and protection of habitat and results in a net loss of biodiversity, a point clearly highlighted by the Auditor General 2022 Report Effectiveness of the Biodiversity Scheme** <https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/effectiveness-of-the-biodiversity-offsets-scheme>

The Auditor General highlights the lack of “like for like” land. A staggering 96% of developer demand for species credits is not met by current supply.

**The following summarises our concerns with the bill:**

1. The Bill states that the new Act will be guided by a strategy but still does not outline what that strategy is. The strategy is to be developed sometime in the future with “ stakeholders” .
2. What are the “ circumstances” in which an offset obligation cannot be met through payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund? This needs to be spelt out up front. Does this mean that the habitat of Endangered and Critically Endangered species will be protected?
3. Appointing an Environment Agency Head as decision maker will not improve transparency. This simply undermines public confidence.

In its current form, this Bill will not

- improve biodiversity outcomes
- support a functioning biodiversity credit market
- increase scheme efficiency and transparency
- better balance the application of the scheme with biodiversity risks
- fails to address issues around monitoring of the scheme when planting has occurred. In Campbelltown, offset planting that Lendlease was required to provide has mostly died off.

Save Sydney’s Koalas raised the issue of offset maintenance via Councillor Matt Stellino to General Manager Jim Baldwin at Campbelltown Council but have to receive a reply. ( email below)

Hi Jim,

I was sent these photos from a member of the public on the state of the trees planted as the offset to Mt. Gilead stage 1 (judging by the photos they look to be along the Menangle Creek Corridor).

I am not sure how many of the trees are dead. It could be limited to the few that are shown in the photos sent to me or it could be across the entire offset.

Who is responsible for making sure the offsets live? Once LL has planted them are they council's responsibility to maintain or replant the dead ones?

Is it possible to ask LL to take a survey on how many are still alive or would this be council's responsibility?

Cheers, Matt

**Cr Matt Stellino**

Councillor

NSW should be looking to end offsets, not massage around the edges if it is serious about biodiversity and the extinction of flora and fauna species.

The following video will illustrate how offsets have worked in Campbelltown- essentially delivering an extinction plan.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/Lqah31NtDJV4yjH1/?mibextid=WC7FNe>

Maria Bradley

President

Save Sydney's Koalas



Figure 1: Appin Rd before and after TfMNSW road widening



Figure 2/3/4 Dead Offset planting Campbelltown

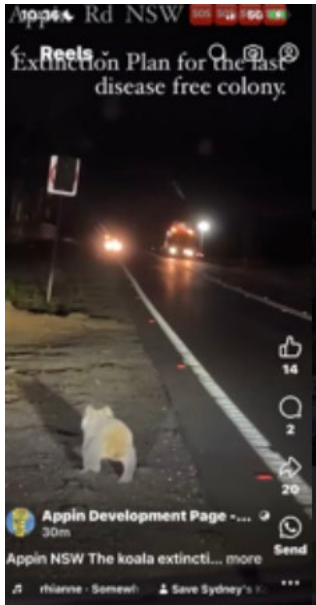


Figure 5 At least 37 recorded koala deaths on Appin Rd since the offset package Stage ! was approved