

Cooma Monaro koalas to be conserved

By [Bill Brown](#)

Discoveries of a significant koala population have led to the Cooma Monaro Shire Council being granted funds to develop a Koala Plan of Management. Koala survey work by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, Rural Fire Service, University of Sydney researchers, and community volunteers over the last 18 months has found evidence of koalas in 50% of the sites surveyed between Cooma and Michelago. The NSW Environmental Trust has provided a grant of \$100,000 to the Cooma Monaro Shire Council to undertake further field survey work to locate the population and study the characteristics of the habitat that is sustaining them.

Project co-ordinator Chris Allen (OE&H) says they have found evidence of a scattered population numbering in the low hundreds along the ranges from east of Cooma to east of Michelago.

He says the population appears to be stable at present whereas many other populations across the country are in decline.

With this funding he says he is 'confident we can really make a difference to the conservation of this population.'

Cooma Monaro Shire Council's Director of Environmental Services, Peter Smith, says this grant will allow a Koala Plan of Management to be developed for the shire.

"It will help us establish mapping and to prepare a plan of management to make sure they are protected," he says.

The next stage of the project will run through until June 2014 during which time the survey area will be extended, populations mapped, and management plans prepared.

"With koalas being such a national icon no-one would like to see their numbers decline through things that could be prevented through better management and land use planning, " says Mr Smith.

"Its a possibility they may be listed as an endangered species and this project will help us get on the front foot so to speak as far as getting things in place."

The management plan will tie in with the shire's Local Environmental Plan especially on issues such as permissible land use, bushfire control, and threats to the population such as predation and land clearing.

[Koala survey - RGBSAT technique - NPWS and NSW OEH](#)



A rare opportunity to see a baby Koala - Potoroo Place, Merimbula (Bill Brown - ABC South East NSW)