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Study sheds new light on koala distribution in north east NSW

A [study](#) by the NSW Government using new techniques to more accurately model the distribution of koalas in north east NSW could lead to better management of its habitat, and highlights the need for further research, the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) said today.

The study by the NSW Department of Industry - Lands overlaid existing historical koala records with new survey techniques with the aim of developing “a cross-tenure predictive habitat suitability model that would be useful for managing the species in the context of forest management”.

AFPA CEO Mr Ross Hampton said the study highlighted the need for further research to get a more accurate picture of koala distribution, as the report detailed some of the limitations of existing records.

“For example, the study notes that around 90 per cent of all koala records were within 250 metres of a road, which means we are not getting the true picture of the marsupial’s distribution,” Mr Hampton said.

“The study also does not fully explore the impact that the major threats to koala populations – bushfires, fragmentation by urbanisation, and predators – have had on koala distribution, and further research is needed to better understand these impacts.”

Mr Hampton said the forest industry supports efforts to improve koala conservation, which is why sustainable forestry operations in both native forests and plantations nationally operate to very high environmental standards.

“The forest industry plays a complementary role in the strategy to enhance koala conservation, through the regulatory framework for sustainable forest management and voluntary efforts on privately owned forest land and commercial forestry operations.”

“AFPA looks forward to continuing to work with the NSW Government on the management of state forests alongside a sustainable forest industry.”

AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

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