



Coffs Harbour bypass

Transport for NSW

Fact Sheet

Vegetation removal and landscape and habitat restoration | April 2023

The Australian and NSW governments are funding the \$2.2 billion, 14-kilometre Coffs Harbour bypass project. The bypass will boost the regional economy and improve connectivity, road transport efficiency and safety for local and interstate motorists.

Reducing vegetation removal

As part of major construction work, the Coffs Harbour bypass project team will be removing vegetation along the alignment from mid-April 2023. The program will be carried out in multiple locations at the same time and, once complete, will enable drainage and earthworks to start.

We acknowledge major linear projects, like the Coffs Harbour bypass, can impact threatened species and native wildlife and we are aiming to mitigate these impacts as much as possible. Through detailed design refinements, we have reduced native vegetation clearing by 20 percent from the approved 48.17 hectares to about 38 hectares.

During selection of the route for the bypass, the preferred alignment was chosen, in part, because of it had less environmental and biodiversity impacts compared to other options. The project team continues to be committed to reducing the amount of vegetation to be removed as much as possible across the bypass.

The Korora Nature Reserve and the White Booyong Fig Subtropical Rainforest (Grandpa's Scrub) will not be impacted and vegetation will not be removed from these sites. Threatened flora species have been translocated in accordance with approved management plans well ahead of vegetation removal.

Our process

The project follows strict protocols for tree removal including a two stage process to reduce impacts on native animals and to relocate threatened plants. This process includes clearly marking out environmental protection exclusion zones that will not be impacted and the areas where vegetation will be removed. Additionally, the project's qualified and experienced ecologist carries out a survey before any vegetation removal starts. This assessment identifies and tags all potential habitat trees –ones that typically have hollows or signs of animals living in them. Other vegetation removal work is started while the habitat trees are not disturbed for at least 48 hours. This time allows animals to relocate nearby, including to the 165 nest boxes installed as part of the Coff Harbour bypass.



Nest box installation

When habitat trees are felled, it is done using a specific method to minimise any disturbance to native animals. All felled habitat trees are inspected by the project ecologist and they also carry out a health assessment on any native animals found. If they are healthy, they are released into adjacent habitat while any injured fauna are taken into care including use of local wildlife carer groups.

This staged method has been successfully used on previous Transport for NSW projects.

Further information is available in the *Threatened Species Management Plan* and *Coffs Harbour Bypass Construction Biodiversity Management Plan* at www.pacifichighway.nsw.gov.au/document-library

Landscape and habitat restoration

Extensive landscaping and revegetation works covering about 150 hectares, at this stage, will be carried out as part of the project. Details will be included in the Place Design and Landscape Plan which the project team will be placing on public display later this year for feedback.

Transport for NSW will be restoring koala habitat and connectivity at several locations including over the Roberts Hill and Gatelys Road tunnels and under the bypass at Jordans Creek. Through the project's dedicated koala revegetation work, we will be restoring eight hectares of previously cleared agricultural land as koala habitat. This work will reconnect bushland from the escarpment to the low lying areas of Coffs Harbour creating a significant fauna corridor. This corridor will benefit other fauna species, will be started two years prior to the bypass completion, and each area will be protected in perpetuity.

The project's koala habitat restoration work will compliment the City of Coffs Harbour Koala Plan.

The project will also protect roughly 300 hectares of natural habitat through biodiversity offsets including the Coffs Basin adjacent to the alignment and Upper Kalang near Urunga. We have also contributed more than \$270,000 to NSW Biodiversity Conservation division for research into the management of Myrtle Rust and its impacts on the Scrub Turpentine species.

This is in addition to the 16 fauna crossings being installed along the project including poles for gliders and culverts and bridges for koalas plus about nine kilometres of fauna fencing.



Koala



Possums using a nestbox

Reuse of timber

As part of the vegetation removal process, all trees are assessed for value of merchantable timber to be re-used for high end purposes. These trees are not mulched but on-sold for quality purposes.

The project will also salvage timber for use in the building of fauna furniture structures within and adjacent to fauna crossings. Additionally, we work closely with Local Land Services to re-use large root balls in creek rehabilitation work in the local area. These rootballs create new habitat for aquatic animals and can help stabilise creek banks.

Any trees not suitable as merchantable timber or fauna furniture are mulched and re-used across the project for erosion and sediment controls.



Contact us

If you have any enquiries and complaints, please contact the project team on 1800 550 621 or community@chbteam.com.au



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