

Planting The Future



Penrith Lakes Vision Plan

**Comments on the Penrith Lakes Parkland
Draft Vision Plan**

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Comments on the Penrith Lakes Parkland Draft Vision Plan

Use of this response form is optional.

Submissions on the draft Plan are **due by 5pm Thursday 30 April 2015**, and can be made via:

- Email to the Office of Penrith Lakes: opl@sport.nsw.gov.au
- Post to the Office of Penrith Lakes, c/o: Locked Bag 1422, Silverwater, NSW 2128.

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Is this a confidential submission? No

[Note: All submissions will be made public unless confidentiality is specifically requested]

What would you like to see developed at Penrith Lakes?

Comments:

We would like to see the reintroduction of the native wildlife supported by a retreat to provide education and training, and encourage and support tourism to Penrith Lakes Parkland.

The precinct evolves around the concepts of "live, work and play". All of this is applicable to Koala Retreat, where we would develop a destination for not only locals, but also national and international tourists. Nowhere in the world is there a concept similar to this – we have one of the most amazing native animals (as well as Australia's leading Koala Nutritionist on our doorstep) yet we do little to leverage these benefits.

We recognise that Penrith Lakes Parkland is divided up into seven precincts. This supports a diverse range of activities and programs. Koala Retreat would like to focus on wildlife and the environment and the mechanics of that, but certainly not to the exclusion of all else – we are keen to be involved in all precincts and be a part of a much larger picture of local talent.

What is the short-term vision for Koala Retreat?

Koala Retreat is a destination that will focus on tourism, wildlife and conservation, and education and research. It will also be income-generating via multiple streams – the Koala industry is worth \$2 billion, and historical evidence proves that the appeal of the Koala is widespread. Koalas are known to have financed major income streams, including in Sydney and Queensland – koalas financed the earlier parts of Australia's Wonderland at Eastern Creek. In addition, Koalas are the only animals that generate income for the San Diego Zoo.

In the short term, our Retreat would develop adjacent to the Sport and Recreation area at the Southern end to maximise the local traffic.

Initially Koala Retreat will focus on generating a captivity program. This will be supported by the creation of a natural and sustainable habitat for local Koala colonies. It is envisioned to have a number of open and close enclosures, all of which can be accessed via multiple levels (ground level, via an outdoor garden or even a mid-level viewing deck). The Retreat will be tiered so as to support as much engagement with the marsupials as possible.

What is the long-term vision for Koala Retreat?

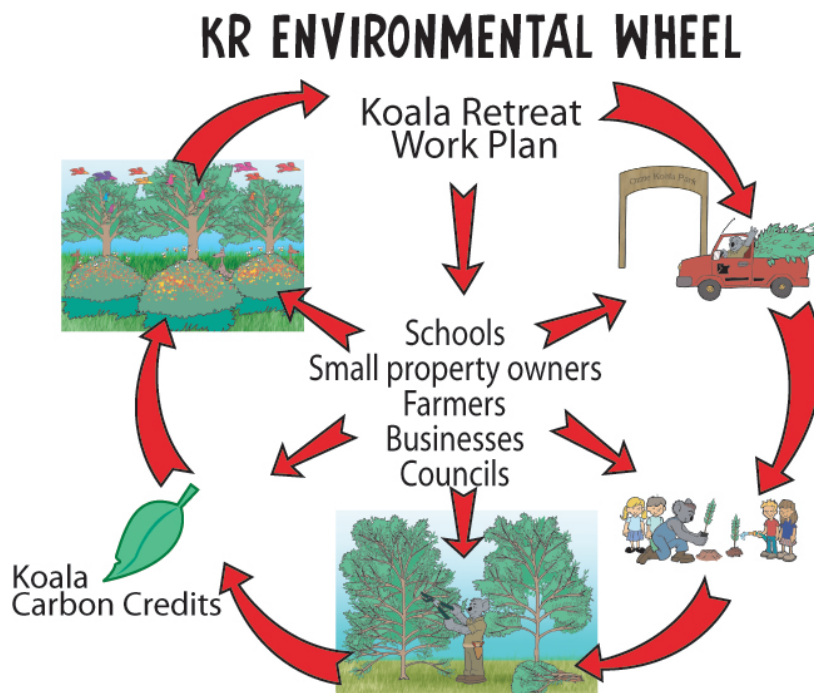
Long-term we see the development of an amphitheatre for not only Koala shows, but also local events, such as an outdoor theatre (including movie nights), twilight sleepovers and the like. The goal is to generate income from multiple streams. This would include:

- Tourism
- Merchandise
- Café and Restaurant
- Subleasing to other businesses that have a similar connection to the environment, conservation and behavioural science, and
- Behavioural conditioning – yoga classes, dancing and youth behavioural training (children with autism and other difficulties).

Koala Retreat would also provide significant local employment opportunities.

Koala Retreat can easily link to all seven precincts – from a building at the Urban Precinct through to the Wildlife lake Precinct where we research, inspire and educate. Our building designs would bring together a number of Precinct small business together under one roof, encouraging collaboration and innovation in our thinking, particularly in a manner that can best support the environment. Koala Retreat has developed our Environmental Wheel, combining commerce with conservation.

Koala Retreat Environmental Wheel

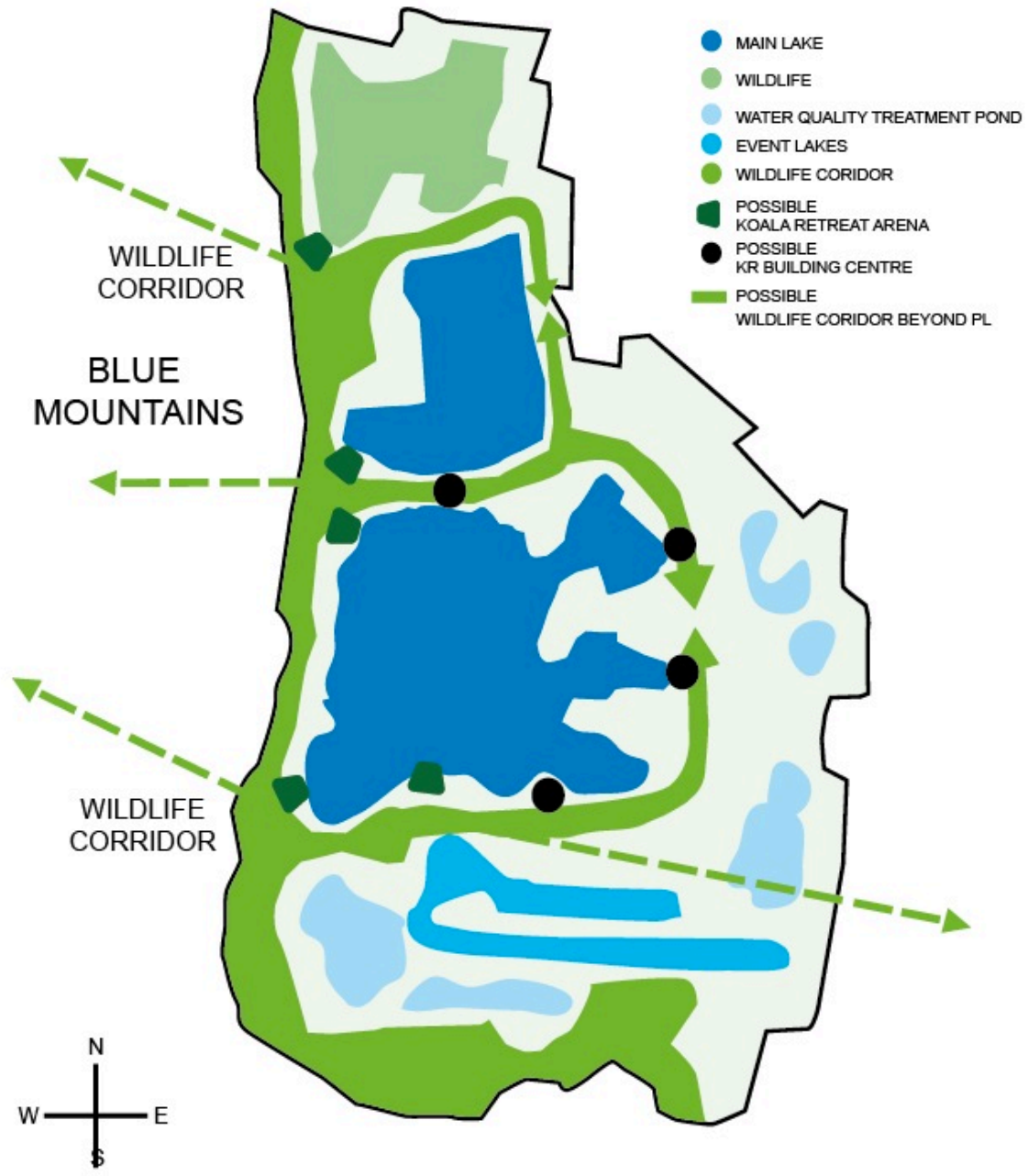


Koala Retreat Design Principles

A map of possible sites can be seen below.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCING KOALA RETREAT TO PENRITH LAKES



What do you think of the proposed precincts?

Comments:

It is clear that all seven precincts have been well thought out and present a diverse range of sustainable options for the future. As mentioned above, Koala Retreat can link to all seven precincts:

1. **Southern Leisure** > Tourism (including grey nomads who travel and can obtain interim volunteer work at the Retreat)
2. **Sports and Events** > The amphitheatre
3. **Chain of Ponds** > Linked to the Retreat, Wildlife Corridor
4. **Urban** > Office space/commercial, residential and local development
5. **Main lakes** > Koala Retreat to overlook the Main Lake
6. **Riverbank Precinct** > Tourist groups, wildlife corridor and a hub for social gatherings
7. **Wildlife Lake Precinct** > Linked to the Retreat and Wildlife corridor.

Koala Retreat recognises the one common theme throughout the lakes – a conglomerate of small individual businesses and activities encompassing and embracing the overarching message of conservation. A singular design theme could provide a link between each of the precincts, creating a world-first approach to environmental design and construct that sets Penrith Lakes apart from any other environmental design in existence.

Examples of how to link each precinct for a long term success includes:

- Combining construction with environmental materials to showcase changes in the industry
- Combining renewable energy with demand
- Combining resources with Recycling
- Combining Residential with Commercial
- Combining Educational institutions with Economic & environmental Sustainability
- Combining Eco tourism with Recreational and Leisure
- Combining Wildlife with food production, and
- Combining Indigenous cultural histories with European Settlement.

By ensuring a theme resonates throughout the seven precincts (showing how they all connect) we not only increase relevance, but also reduce long-term costs. It also creates an entire experience – adventure, connection and diversity.

What uses or activities would you like to see at the site?

Comments:

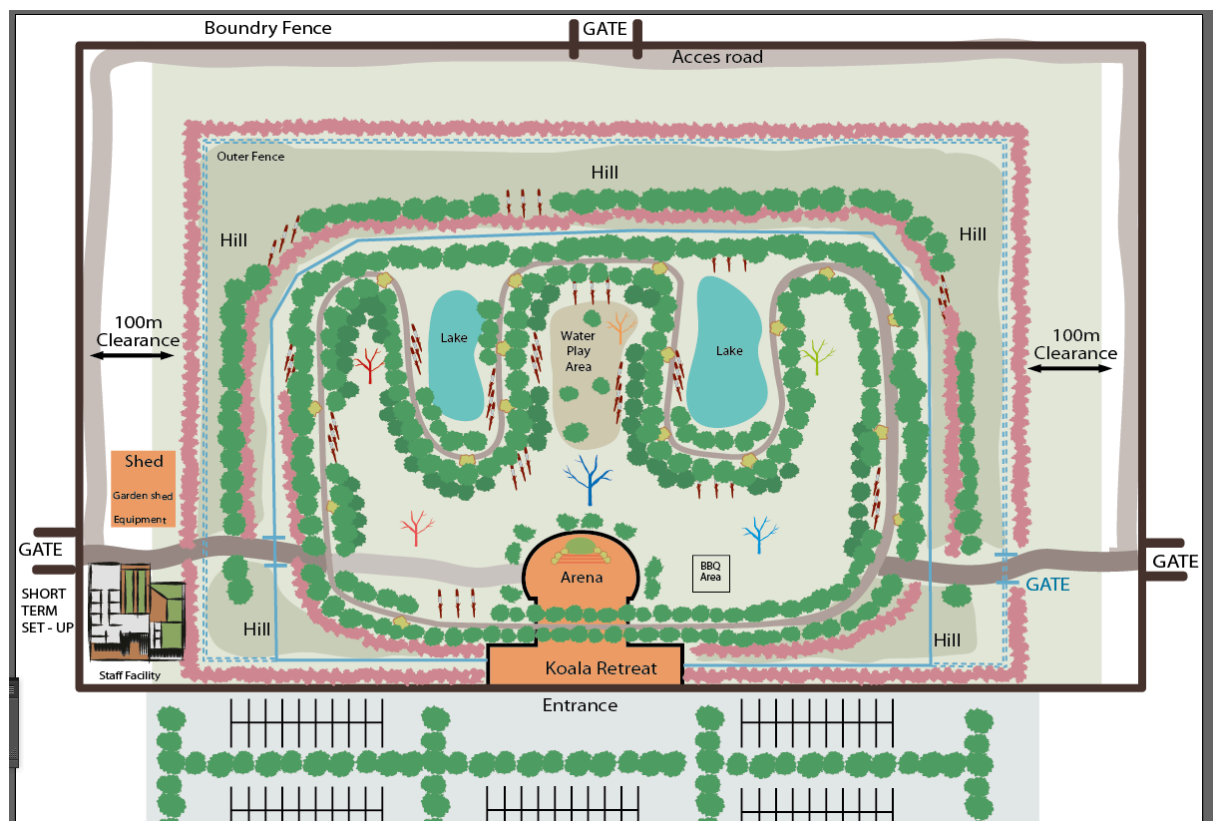
Penrith Lakes Parkland is divided up into seven precincts. This supports a diverse range of activities and programs. Koala Retreat would like to focus on wildlife and the environment and the mechanics of that, but certainly not to the exclusion of all else – we are keen to be involved in all precincts and be a part of a much larger picture of local talent.

We are hoping the people of Penrith and surrounds will support the reintroduction of Koalas back to their area – both in wildlife as well as in specifically designed open enclosures, enabling residents and tourists to get up-close and personal.

Imagine sitting at a 5-star restaurant ordering your meal and hearing Koalas jumping from branch to branch before settling in for the afternoon. Imagine being surrounded by a canopy of trees while you enjoy your coffee or meal. Imagine the late-afternoon sun descending after an amazing summer's day, and making eye contact with one of the world's most adored marsupials while ordering your evening meal. Just imagine.

Koala Retreat would be developed to not only study marsupials and other native species in general, but also open the discussion of a conservation program and re-introduce Koalas into the Blue Mountains. We would also create educational programs, which would be of interest to both tourists and schools. We would provide an experience – where else can you experience biodiversity and see the results in action?

Koala Retreat has a vision – we want to encourage ingenuity, innovation and inspiration within the community, encouraging people and children to think outside of the box!



What ideas do you have about the future uses of the site?

Comments:

Resident, visitor and tourist interaction

Koala Retreat has ideas to not only bring the seven precincts together as a unified, central space but also numerous suggestions as to how the space can be used to support residents, visitors and tourists in engaging with the environment.

Viewing platforms for the Blue Mountains: Koala Retreat would like to contribute towards a number of viewing platforms for tourists and guests to view the stunning local sunrise and sunset, featuring the world-class Blue Mountains as the backdrop. Some of the best viewing platforms are at resorts around the world, such as Bali's [Como Shambhala Estate](#) or [Gwinganna](#) on the Gold Coast (Gwinganna is indigenous word for 'lookout').

Koala Retreat education activities: Koala Retreat would run multiple education activities – from Koala-specific activities through to looking at the soil in the ground and the types of plants associated with that soil. Our goal is to create fun, environmentally-conscious activities for both local residents and tourists, including school children.

School engagement: As outlined above, Koala Retreat will engage with local private and public schools to provide education that supports the various curriculum requirements for pre-, primary and high school. Student engagement is key to maximising not only tourist off-season, but also ensuring a continuous flow of visitors during the week.

Twilight sleepouts: Much like the Taronga Zoo concept, Koala Retreat would provide tourists and locals (including schools and local groups, such as Scouts) with the opportunity to camp out under the stars. Imagine sleeping under a canopy of trees along with our native animals!

Café/Restaurant: As with the sleepout, imagine dining alongside Koalas and with a slight breeze rustling through the trees. We envisage Penrith Lakes Parkland to be a complete destination – this includes not only leveraging our local fauna and flora to engage visitors, but also transforming our local produce into mouth-watering meals.

Outdoor entertainment and behavioural conditioning: Koala Retreat has a long-term plan to design and develop an amphitheatre, which would be utilised for not only Koala shows, but can be leveraged for entertainment and behavioural conditioning (such as yoga) purposes. At present, locals have to travel in order to enjoy outdoor movies, theatre and other events – this would provide Penrith with the ultimate entertainment destination.

Board development

Koala Retreat would like to see a number of future Board Members who are elected based on their profession, and have the Board itself designed into different categories. Examples could include:

1. Environmental design expert
2. Small business
3. Corporate business
4. Professional sportsperson
5. Aquatic or water expert

6. Urban and rural real estate
7. Financial
8. Events curator experts
9. Native animal representative expert
10. Environmental and sustainability expert
11. Parks and leisure expert
12. Construction
13. Council

These examples cover all aspects of the ideal structure of Penrith Lakes. Once the categories have been established, professionals in the chosen categories can only be elected according to their own profession. Elections are ideally run every four years.

What would you see as the priority precincts for delivery to the public?

Comments:

Undoubtedly, it is strong infrastructure planning and architecture.

The construction of the buildings can leave a lasting impression. Penrith Lakes Parkland has a unique opportunity to develop an approach that sits outside of current conventional living. This needs to be leveraged as strongly as possible via strong planning and architectural development to ensure our infrastructure, both commercial and residential, is designed with a strong environmental message in mind. We want to develop destinations that work with the environment of the Lakes, not against it, and that become one with the surrounds. For Koala Retreat, showing how a new form of design and construction works in harmony with the rest of the environment is key.

An example is at the Broadway, Sydney, where urban development meets rural settings. This building could be the foundation of the future whereby Penrith Lakes can design something similar – the Broadway has spectacular architectural design. Koala Retreat would like to utilise this concept as the basis for our design, developing infrastructure that is structured above the ground and combines engineering recyclable technology, vertical green walls and artistry all-round. Our goal? To enable and support nature to thrive under our feet by using architecturally-designed native landscapes that promote what makes this area significant, allowing rare and indigenous plants and to grow underneath our feet.

Do you have any other comments on the Draft Vision Plan?

Comments:

Koala Retreat has a vision of the future. Penrith Lakes Parklands needs to be innovative in its approach and develop a long-term solution for tourism and local lifestyle that will be supported both now and well into the future. We need to look at ways to educate and excite people not just within our own community, but also around the world.

While we may not be on the cutting edge of housing and building designing at the beginning, it is vital that we at least allow room for flexibility in the planning stage. Design and construction must be developed with a shared vision in mind of inviting people to engage with and enjoy our connection to the local environment.

For example: Setting high standards, such as having buildings developed off the ground to allow native vegetation to grow underneath with every building seeming to utilise more air-space than land space. Again, thinking outside the box!

Koala Retreat would like to focus on wildlife and the environment and the mechanics of both, but certainly not to the exclusion of all else – we are keen to be involved in all precincts and be a part of a much larger picture of local talent.

About Koala Retreat

Located in Penrith district, Koala Retreat is a business that supports our native koalas by providing specific services to the Zoological Industry, including:

- Behavioural consultation
- Feeding, and
- The provision of a nutrient-rich diet that the Zoological industry is unable to cultivate and deliver.

We also provide an in-depth captivity program, which starts with the koala's diet, and evolves around every aspect of their daily lives in captivity to maintain their natural instincts. We work with not only wildlife specialists Australia-wide but also industry, local businesses, school children and families to encourage:

- Conservation
- Education
- Professional development (industry), and
- Training.

We are led by one of Australia's most knowledgeable koala experts, Marcus Zorich, who is also extensively involved in the study and teaching of behavioural and environmental science for the herbivorous marsupials.

As a local partner, you have access to not only a leading Koala specialist, but also a Behavioural Centre that can add a great deal of value to your current planning and a partner who can ensure that a natural and sustainable habitat for local koala colonies is created and maintained.

For further information and discussion, please contact Marcus Zorich on 0419 956 723 or via marcuszorich@koalaretreat.com.

