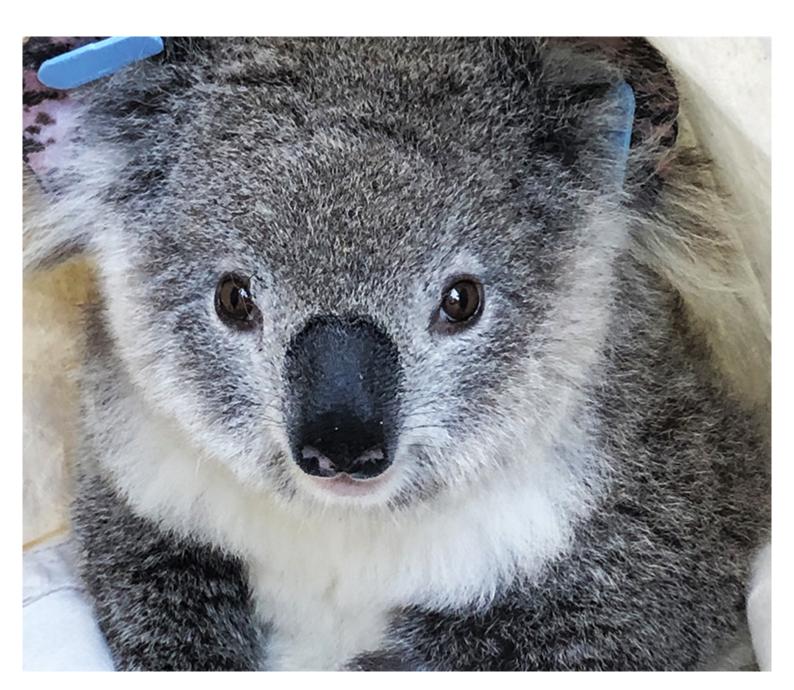**Department of Planning, Industry and Environment**

Koala Care Assessment Tool

Volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector
An application check against the Code of
Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Koalas

Cover photo: Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*). Madeline Newbery/DPIE

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Contents

Purpose

This Koala Care Assessment Tool (the tool) has been designed for wildlife rehabilitation groups to monitor their level of compliance with the *Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Koalas* (the code). Its primary purpose is to proactively help inform and guide improvements to their standards of koala care and optimise post-rehabilitation outcomes.

The tool is for use by species coordinators and experienced koala rehabilitators such as mentors and/or buddies. It aims to provide an objective snapshot of a group members application of all, or specific parts of the code. When applied across multiple members, the tool can also strategically inform future training and guide grant applications for replacement enclosures or other assets which are not code compliant.

Everyone authorised to interact with koalas is required to act in accordance with the code. It has been developed to protect the welfare of rescued koalas and support the conservation of wild koala populations. Compliance with the code is a condition of a Biodiversity Conservation Licence to conduct wildlife rehabilitation under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.* The person applying the tool must be familiar with the content and application of the code.

Wildlife rehabilitation groups are encouraged to maintain a register of volunteers who have been assessed under this tool and to compare against previous inspections.

How to use this assessment tool

The tool is divided into 4 sections:

1. training
2. records management
3. facility inspection
4. field observation of animal rescue and transport.

An inspection may target one or more sections of the tool. Each section aligns with specific standards in the code. It is preferable to complete Sections 1, 2 and 3 together or Sections 1 and 4.

Content of each section

- A place to enter the assessor and group members names, signatures and date of inspection.
- Code standards to be assessed.
- An overall assessment question and prompts to help guide the assessment.
- Targeted questions which align with specific standards in the code.
- This section provides places to select a response, score and tally the results of the assessment.
- Notes about any observations you make during the inspection and to make specific recommendations.

What to take to the assessment?

It is important to do some planning before you go on-site.

Things to think about

- Contact the group member and arrange a mutually convenient time.
- Consider if an observer should also attend with the assessor.
- Explain the purpose of the assessment to the person before coming and at the premises.
- Ask if there are koalas on-site and at what stage of rehabilitation.
- Identify which standards you intend to assess.
- Pack a copy of the relevant code of practice.
- Be familiar with the data report template.
- Bring a mobile phone and ask if you can take photos.
- Take a tape measure.
- Bring a pencil, pen and clipboard or laptop.

Scoring each section and collating the results

Each targeted question requires the assessor to circle the appropriate answer in the adjacent column. Only one answer can be selected. The answers can be then be collated, scored and converted to a percentage.

This worked example has 4 target questions

Code of Practice standards: 10.2 Release site selection; 10.3 release techniques			
Assessment question: Were decisions made about the release of koalas in accordance with the standard?			
Target questions	**Select one response for each question**		
1. Of the koalas released, how many were put in a suitable environment at or as near as possible to their place of rescue (i.e. <1km)?	**All**	Some	None	N/A
2. Of the koalas released, how many sub-adults were with a buddy?	All	Some	None	**N/A**
3. How many koalas were tagged before release?	All	Some	**None**	N/A
4. Of the koalas released, how many had a DNA sample taken and sent to the Australian Museum?	**All**	Some	None	N/A
How to calculate an assessment score			
Step 1: Tally the selected responses for each column e.g. 2 All; 1 None and 1 N/A	2	0	1	1
Step 2: Subtract the number of Not Applicable (N/A) answers from the total number of target questions. In this example 4 - 1 = 3 Display the score for each column as a fraction.	2/3	0/3	1/3	
Step 3: Convert the above fraction to a percentage (%)	67%	0%	33%	

In this example, the assessor recorded **'All'** for 2 of the 4 questions, **'None'** for one question and Not Applicable **(N/A)** for the other. The target question about sub-adult koalas was not applicable to this assessment because the person did not have any sub-adults in care. The group member, therefore, cannot be assessed on the release of these animals. This question must then be deducted from the total number of target assessment questions.

The total assessment score is 2/3 applicable questions 67% All and 33% None.

Insert the score or percentage for 'Alls' in the Assessment Summary.

Section 1: Training

The purpose of this section is to assess the currency of training. This should be done before other sections of the assessment and verified with the group member.

Member Name:	Signature:	Date:
Assessor Name:	Signature	Date:

Code of Practice standard: 11 Training

Assessment question: Is the member trained to rescue and/or rehabilitate koalas?

Prompts: Check the member's details and group training register before the inspection. Confirm what tasks the member does with koalas and what training they require.

Target questions	Select one response for each question	
1. Is the member authorised to work with koalas?	Yes	No
2. Has the member completed the required training for the tasks they perform?	Yes	No
3. Is the member's training current?	Yes	No
Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction		
Convert to a percentage (%)		
Notes:		
Recommendations:		

Section 2: Records management

The purpose of this section is to assess the group member's koala records, including decisions made about the fate of animals in care. It may help to review the previous year's records before commencing the assessment.

Member Name:	Signature:	Date:
Assessor Name:	Signature	Date:

Code of Practice standards:
12 Record keeping; 10.2 Release site selection; 10.3 Release techniques and 5.1, 5.2 Euthanasia

Assessment Question 1: Is the member's record sheet current, accurate and compliant with the standard?

Prompts: Request to see this report year's record sheet. The fields in the register should be equivalent to the standard i.e. the data template.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many koalas currently in care are listed in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
2. How many koalas have their rescue date, location and encounter data entered in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
3. How many koalas have their sex, weight and body score entered in the record sheet?	All	Some	None	N/A
4. How many dead or released koalas have had their fates entered?	All	Some	None	N/A
5. How many koalas transferred to or from another facility have a dated identification record and location of transfer?	All	Some	None	N/A
Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction (remember to deduct any N/As from the total)				
Convert to a percentage (%)				
Notes:				

Records Management (continued)

Assessment Question 2: Were decisions made about the release of koalas in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Check the fate and release location details section in the record sheet. Be familiar with the 'Release site selection' standards in the code.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. Of the koalas released, how many were put in a suitable environment at or as near as possible to their place of rescue (i.e. <1km)? *	All	Some	None	N/A
2. Of the koalas released, how many sub-adults were with a buddy?	All	Some	None	N/A
3. How many koalas were tagged before release?	All	Some	None	N/A
4. Of the koalas released, how many had a DNA sample taken and sent to the Australian Museum?	All	Some	None	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes:

*Exclude those animals that received approval from National Parks and Wildlife Service to be placed elsewhere.

Records Management (continued)

Assessment Question 3: Were decisions made about the euthanasia and permanent care of koalas in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Check the fate details section in the record sheet. Be familiar with the 'When to Euthanase' standards in the code.

Target questions	Select one response			
1. How many koalas were euthanased in accordance with criteria in the code (list reasons in notes)?	All	Some	None	N/A
2. How many of the koalas held in permanent care have written approval from National Parks and Wildlife Service?	All	Some	None	N/A
Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction (remember to deduct any N/As from the total)				
Convert to a percentage (%)				

Notes:

Recommendations:

Section 3: Facility inspection

The purpose of this section is to assess the group members rehabilitation facility, including its housing, husbandry and care procedures. If the facility does not participate in the intensive care, intermediate care or pre-release of koalas, then move to another section and place **N/A** in notes.

Member Name:	Signature:	Date:
Assessor Name:	Signature	Date:

Section 3a: Housing and Husbandry – Intensive care

Code of Practice standards:

7 Husbandry; 8 Housing (8.1 General requirements and 8.2 Intensive care housing)

Assessment Question 1: Are intensive care housing enclosures (ICEs) constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Ask to see the intensive care koala enclosures. Only answer if koalas are present, otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many intensive care enclosures (ICEs) have floor dimensions at least 70cm long by 70cm wide?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many ICEs are positioned to protect each koala from wild animals and pests?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many ICEs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the koala?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many ICEs are designed or positioned to reduce auditory stimuli?	All	None	>Half	<Half
5. How many ICEs contain a prop for each koala to hold onto?	All	None	>Half	<Half
6. How many ICEs provide a constant temperature regulated by a thermostat?	All	None	>Half	<Half
7. How many ICEs use a soft substrate?	All	None	>Half	<Half
8. How many ICEs are supplied with clean and sterilised teats, bottles and syringes?	All	None	>Half	<Half
9. How many enclosures are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half

Section 3a: Housing and Husbandry – Intensive care

	All	None	>Half	<Half
10. How many ICEs have fresh drinking water available?	All	None	>Half	<Half
11. How many ICEs have fresh eucalypt leaves for the koala?	All	None	>Half	<Half
12. How many ICEs provide eucalypt leaves from at least two different species?	All	None	>Half	<Half

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes: Enter N/A here if the person does not participate in intensive care or has no koalas.

Recommendations:

Section 3b: Housing and Husbandry – Intermediate care

Code of Practice standards:

7 Husbandry; 8 Housing (8.1 General requirements and 8.3 Intermediate care housing)

Assessment Question 1: Are intermediate care housing (ITEs) enclosures constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Ask to see the intermediate care enclosures for koalas. Only answer if koalas are present, otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many intermediate care enclosures (ITEs) have floor dimensions at least 2m long by 2m wide by 2m high?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many ITEs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the koala?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many ITEs provide a light/dark cycle that replicates outside conditions?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many ITEs are positioned to protect each koala from domestic animals, pests, excessive noise and vibrations?	All	None	>Half	<Half
5. How many ITEs contain 2 branches, each with a fork and one slanted pole?	All	None	>Half	<Half
6. How many ITEs provide contaminant free dirt and bark?	All	None	>Half	<Half
7. How many ITEs are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half
8. How many ITEs have fresh drinking water available?	All	None	>Half	<Half
9. How many ITEs have fresh eucalypt leaves for the koala?	All	None	>Half	<Half
10. How many ITEs provide eucalypt leaves from at least 2 different species?	All	None	>Half	<Half

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes: Enter N/A if the person does not participate in intermediate care or has no koalas.

Recommendations:

Section 3c: Housing and Husbandry – Pre-release housing

Code of Practice standards:

7 Husbandry; 8 Housing (8.1 General requirements and 8.4 Pre-release housing)

Assessment Question 1: Are pre-release care facilities (PREs) constructed, positioned and maintained in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Ask to see the pre-release enclosures for koalas. Only answer if koalas are present otherwise enter N/A in notes.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. How many pre-release enclosures (PREs) have floor dimensions at least 6m long by 6m wide and provide up to 3m of usable vertical space?	All	None	>Half	<Half
2. How many PREs have smooth walls at least 1.5 high and at least 2m from the nearest branch?	All	None	>Half	<Half
3. How many PREs contain habitat elements such as 3 tree forks to a height of at least 3m?	All	None	>Half	<Half
4. How many tree forks that have slanted angled runners to encourage natural movement?	All	None	>Half	<Half
5. How many PREs are escape-proof and have no hazards that might harm the koala?	All	None	>Half	<Half
6. How many PREs are positioned to protect each koala from domestic animals, pests, excessive noise and vibrations?	All	None	>Half	<Half
7. How many PREs provide areas where the koala can shelter and gain exposure to outside weather?	All	None	>Half	<Half
8. How many PREs provide contaminant free dirt and bark?	All	None	>Half	<Half
9. How many PREs are clean and well maintained?	All	None	>Half	<Half
10. How many PREs have fresh drinking water available?	All	None	>Half	<Half
11. How many PREs have fresh eucalypt leaves for the koala?	All	None	>Half	<Half
12. How many PREs provide eucalypt leaves from at least 2 different species?	All	None	>Half	<Half

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction

Section 3c: Housing and Husbandry – Pre-release housing

Convert to a percentage (%)

Notes: Enter N/A if the person does not have pre-release housing or has no koalas.

Recommendations:

Section 3d: Housing and Husbandry – General care

Code of Practice standards:
6 Care procedures; 6.2 Controlling disease transmission; 7.1 Husbandry; 9 Suitability for release?

Assessment Question: Are the koalas in the facility managed according to the standard
Prompts: Observe the koalas in care and ask to view the husbandry plan if there is one. Ask the following questions and circle the appropriate response. If a koala is not present enter N/A.

Target questions	Select one response for each question				
1. How many koalas have undergone a veterinary assessment or assessment by an experienced koala rehabilitator	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
2. How many koalas suspected of an infectious disease are in isolation?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
3. How many koalas in intensive care are weighed at least twice a week (view record sheet)?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
4. How many koalas in intermediate care are weighed at least once a week (view record sheet)?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A
5. How many koalas are monitored and have their body condition, hydration levels, scat quantity and behaviour recorded?	All	None	>Half	<Half	N/A

Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction
(remember to deduct any N/As from the total)

Convert to a percentage (%)

Section 3d: Housing and Husbandry – General care

For koalas about to be released If no koalas are ready for release, circle N/A.	N/A		
1. Has the release suitability of the koala been confirmed by a veterinarian or experienced koala rehabilitator?	Yes	No	Some
2. Has the member correctly described why the animal is physically ready for release?	Yes	No	Some
3. Has the member correctly described why the animal is behaviourally ready for release?	Yes	No	Some
Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction			
Convert to a percentage (%)			
Notes:			
Recommendations:			

Section 4: Field observation

This section is a practical assessment of the application of the rescue, transport and release standards in the code. It is best conducted in the field through observation, although parts such as personal protective equipment (PPE), rescue equipment and release considerations maybe completed as part of the facility inspection and record management sections.

Member Name:	Signature:	Date:
Assessor Name:	Signature	Date:

Section 4a: Rescue and Transport

Code of Practice standards: 3 Rescue; 4 Transport

Assessment Question 1: Did the member prepare for the rescue in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Observe how the member prepares for a rescue.

Target questions	Select one response for each question			
1. Did the rescuer assess the koala to determine if rescue is required?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
2. Did the rescuer consider all the risks from environmental hazards to themselves surrounding observers and the koala?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
3. Did the rescuer possess the appropriate PPE?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
4. Did the rescuer assess the number of koalas requiring rescue, their sex and presence of back young?	Yes	No	Some	N/A
Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction (remember to deduct any N/As from the total)				
Convert to a percentage (%)				
Notes:				

Assessment Question 2: Was the rescue of the koala undertaken in accordance with the standard?

Prompts: Observe the method and conduct of the koala's physical rescue.

Target questions	Select one response for each question		
1. Did the rescuer use the correct rescue equipment?	Yes	No	N/A
2. Did the rescuer limit the exposure to additional stressors such as onlookers, loud noises and other animals?	Yes	No	N/A
3. Did the rescuer use the correct method to capture the koala?	Yes	No	N/A
4. Did the rescuer conduct any surrounding searches for orphaned young or adult female (mother)?	Yes	No	N/A
5. Did the rescuer check a deceased female koala for pouch young and remove it using the correct method?	Yes	No	N/A
Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction (remember to deduct any N/As from the total)			
Convert to a percentage (%)			
Notes:			

Assessment Question 3: Was the koala transported in accordance with the standard?
Prompts: Observe the method and conduct of the koala's physical transport.

Target questions	Select one response for each question		
1. Was the transport container appropriate for the size and condition of the koala?	Yes	No	N/A
2. Was the koala positioned so its breathing is not restricted?	Yes	No	N/A
3. Was the transport container placed in the correct position in the vehicle?	Yes	No	N/A
4. Was the transport container covered with a breathable cloth?	Yes	No	N/A
Tally responses for each column and display the score as a fraction (remember to deduct any N/As from the total)			
Convert to a percentage (%)			
Notes:			
Recommendations:			

Assessment summary

There is no pass or fail associated with this assessment. Its purpose is to identify those standards in the code that can be improved upon. Specific recommendations for improvement can be provided below. A timeframe should be discussed and agreed with the group member to implement any recommendations.

Summarise the outcome of the assessment in the table below:

- circle Yes for each section assessed
- enter the total score as a fraction (i.e. X/Y) for answers with a Yes or All
- enter the percentage score (%) for answers with a Yes or All.

Assessed	Section	Grade score Yes/All	Grade score (%) Yes/All
Yes	Training		
Yes	Record Keeping (Assessment Q1)		
Yes	Record Keeping (Assessment Q2)		
Yes	Record Keeping (Assessment Q3)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Intensive care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Intermediate care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (Pre-release care)		
Yes	Housing/Husbandry (General care)		
Yes	Rescue and Transport (Assessment Q1)		
Yes	Rescue and Transport (Assessment Q2)		
Yes	Rescue and Transport (Assessment Q3)		

Recommendations:

More information

- Code of Practice
- Data report template