



Environment Institute
of Australia and
New Zealand

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS CONFERENCE 3.0

From offsetting to nature positive

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Photo by David Francis



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ABSTRACT

Using offsets to secure a critical wildlife corridor in Australia's fastest growing regional city

The City of Gold Coast's Council Plan and Our Natural City Strategy identifies key actions to secure and connect the City's four critical nature corridors, including the recently identified Northern Koala Corridor. The City's Northern Koala Corridor - within the rapidly growing suburbs of Coomera and Pimpama - is considered critical to the long-term survival of a highly threatened koala population. Based on decades of scientific study, the City is working with its partners to fund, secure and restore a 1500-hectare core koala habitat area east of the Pacific Motorway that links to extensive habitats in the city's hinterland. Environmental offsets are playing an active and critical role in the success of this exciting conservation story by increasing and improving habitat, with 138 hectares already delivered on City-owned land. These offsets were triggered under legislation at all levels of government to counterbalance a range of impacts occurring at various locations. Some offset plantings are already supporting koalas, with evidence of established home ranges. Currently approved, but not yet delivered offset projects are continuing this strategic approach and will restore a further 91 hectares of the corridor. In addition, the City has recently purchased a 193 hectare corridor parcel as a proposed offset receiving site for both koala and nutrient offsets. The City is also connecting the Northern Koala Corridor with the hinterland through the recent acquisition of three properties which provided 55ha of additional offset receiving capacity. Once restored, these areas will facilitate safe movement across the landscape, support genetic viability, and provide population resilience to threatening processes. The Northern Koala Corridor initiative demonstrates how strategic offset delivery can facilitate coordinated management, cost-sharing and conservation outcomes for both government organisations and the community.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY

Mikalah Koch has worked in several environmental roles in local government for over 12 years and is the current Team Leader of the environmental offsets team delivering the City's environmental offsets program of work. Since being in an environmental offsets role, Mikalah has been instrumental in gaining approval and planning for numerous new environmental offsets sites in the city, including delivery of offsets in the Northern Koala Corridor.