

## Response to question on notice

### Questions on Notice Paper No 09

05 September 2025

Question No. 570

**Thomas Emerson MLA:** To ask the Minister for Climate Change, Environment Energy and Water

1. What investigations and surveys were done after a koala was seen in an area being marked out for development in Jacka.
2. What were the results of those surveys, and can the Minister provide the survey results.
3. Has the Suburban Land Agency paused their plans to expand the suburb into the forested areas the koala was seen in, including what role the Office of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna has had in this process.
4. Can the Minister provide all correspondence between the Office of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna and the Suburban Land Agency regarding the koala referred to in part (1) and subsequent actions.
5. Has the ACT Government received any federal funding for koala conservation in the ACT; if so, what has the funding been spent on.

**SUZANNE ORR MLA** - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Note: the Koala is known in the Ngunnawal language as 'Gula' (Winanggaay Ngunnawal language group), and this term is appropriate to use when referring to animals on Ngunnawal Country.

1. Conservation Officers acting on behalf of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna (Conservator) developed a best-practice environmental due diligence survey plan, which was reviewed by an independent panel of Koala experts. Surveys commenced on 24 October 2024.

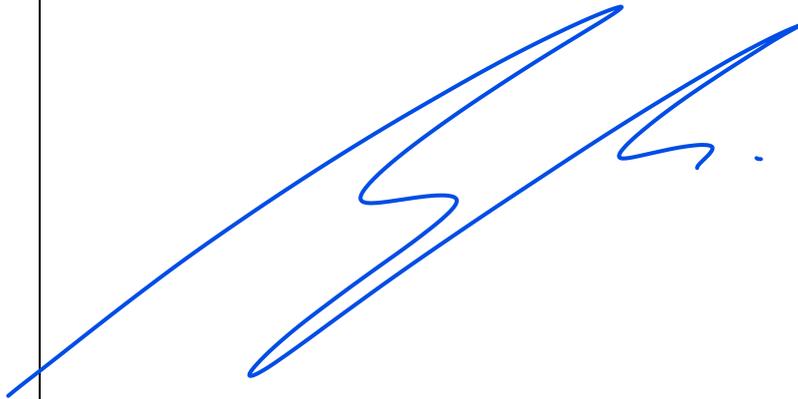
Survey activities occurred across the scheduled development area and the adjoining Northern Gungahlin Woodlands and included acoustic monitoring, scent detection dogs, thermal drone flights, ground-based surveys (spotlighting and thermally-assisted ground surveys), and vegetation assessment.

2. Due diligence surveys confirmed that one or more Gula were present in the scheduled development area for at least four weeks. Evidence of Gula presence was found by scat and sign detected across a broad corridor of habitat found to contain important koala

tree species, confirming the scheduled development area and the adjoining Northern Gungahlin Woodlands constitutes occupied Gula habitat. No evidence of Gula was found in the Gungahlin Eucalypt Plantation immediately north of the scheduled development area, despite containing important koala tree species.

3. The SLA has paused the development whilst an environmental self-assessment under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is undertaken. The self-assessment (EPBC Act) is to determine whether development could proceed without adversely impacting potential koala habitat. The self-assessment includes an engagement of an independent ecologist to provide further advice on the habitat of the area. The self-assessment process is expected to conclude early 2026.
4. As the Conservator and the SLA are statutory entities, the release of correspondence may appropriately be sought via Freedom of Information requests to those entities.
5. In 2023, the ACT received an Australian Government grant totalling \$97,000 to build capacity in the Ngunnawal community to engage in Gula conservation. The funding was used to support on Country days, a community workshop and habitat plantings.

**Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.**



**Suzanne Orr MLA**

**Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water**

**Date:** 10/10/25

This response required 1hrs 25mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$137.17.