



Media release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Program to protect koalas and coastal emus

A \$100,000 program that aims to boost numbers of koalas and coastal emus in the Clarence Valley has received the green light.

Clarence Valley Council has formally accepted a grant from the NSW Environment Trust to run an extensive education and community engagement program aimed at helping landowners to develop methods to protect and enhance habitat for koalas and the endangered coastal emus.

Council's natural resource management project officer, Heather Mitchell, said the grant, together with some direct funding through the Species of Significance scheme, would help address some of the key threats to koalas in the Waterview and Seelands areas.

"It will also include on-ground extension work to address threats to emus, including fire, pest animals and barriers," she said.

"Education material will be developed and disseminated to identified landowners in emu and koala habitat areas to protect the last remaining coastal emu population and the dispersed and declining populations of koalas in the Clarence."

Ms Mitchell said coastal emus were once widespread along the coastal zone of Eastern Australia, but now only occurred between Arrawarra and Evans Head, and the latest population estimates in 2017 counted only 33 individuals, decreasing from 47 counted in 2016.

According to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, there has been a dramatic decline in their numbers over recent decades. It says much of the impact is felt at the nesting stage of the emu's lifecycle with ground-nesting exposing the adults, eggs and chicks to a range of threats from predators, fire, machinery and other human disturbance.

"We want to work cooperatively with landowners to restore these populations," Ms Mitchell said.

Release ends.

For media inquiries contact Clarence Valley Council communications coordinator, David Bancroft, on 6643 0230 or 0429 104 118.