



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

CONDITIONS FOR THE OVERSEAS TRANSFER OF KOALAS

Effective from April 2009

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CONDITIONS FOR THE OVERSEAS TRANSFER OF KOALAS

PREAMBLE

The koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, is a highly specialised arboreal marsupial that feeds primarily on the genus *Eucalyptus*. In general, wild koalas are solitary animals occupying discrete home ranges. In captivity, most successful captive koala colonies are maintained in small groups.

In the past, attempts to establish self-sustaining colonies of koalas in overseas facilities were largely unsuccessful with one of the major problems being inbreeding. Since 1980, however, when conditions governing the overseas transfer of koalas were introduced, it has become evident that successful export and establishment of koalas can be accomplished.

Koalas are selected for overseas transfer according to approved species management principles.

Careful preparation and attention to detail together with the establishment and maintenance of close liaison between the Australian exporter and its overseas counterpart, is essential to the success of koala transfers and overall wellbeing of the new colony.

The following conditions have been formulated to ensure the welfare of koalas involved in overseas transfers. The conditions provide the framework within which it is determined whether the statutory requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* have been met regarding transport, accommodation and care en route to and from, and in, overseas facilities.

These conditions have been developed in consultation with a number of interested groups including the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA)¹, in particular, the Monotreme and Marsupial Taxon Advisory Group. The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) would like to thank the contributors for the work and effort they put into the compilation of this document. A list of contributors is available from DEWHA.

While DEWHA reserves the right to amend these conditions without prior notice to an affected person, every reasonable effort will be made to discuss the amendment prior to its implementation. For further information, please contact Wildlife Trade Assessments, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, GPO Box 787, Canberra ACT 2601 Australia, phone +61 2 6274 2343, fax +61 2 6274 1921, or email wta@environment.gov.au .

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1. SELECTION OF EXPORT STOCK

- 1.1 a) The optimum age range for koalas at the time of the proposed transfer is between 18 and 48 months. This age range applies to all koalas, whether male or female, of captive or wild origin. Animals outside the optimum age range will only be approved for transfer where the applicant can demonstrate that the animal's health and behavioural characteristics are such that the risks to the animal are no greater than for optimum-age koalas.
- b) Captive bred koalas should be chosen in preference to those of wild origin for export. Wild origin koalas will only be approved for export in exceptional cases (for example, where the animal has been brought into a shelter at a young age and raised in captivity thereafter and it can be demonstrated that there are no available captive-bred specimens equally, or better, suited for the export).
- c) In addition to condition 1.1 (b), if of wild origin, koalas to be transferred must:
- i) have been in captivity for at least 12 months; and
 - ii) have been in captivity prior to 12 months of age; and
 - iii) not have been removed from the wild for the purpose of export.
- d) Where age cannot be determined by date of birth, extent of the animal's tooth wear will be used to indicate age. This should be done by a veterinarian experienced in the care and treatment of koalas.
- 1.2 Female koalas caring for young or carrying pouch young cannot be selected for transfer.
- 1.3 Koalas are regularly bred in captivity. DEWHA must be advised of the specific role each animal being exported will play at the receiving institution (e.g. only for display, to become part of a breeding group, etc). If the animal is to become a part of a breeding group it must genetically complement the existing population. This should be confirmed by the relevant Australasian Species Management Program advisor or other person with experience in genetic management of captive populations.
- 1.4 Animals must not be selected for the purpose of a circus or similar activity.

2. PRE EXPORT REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 Koalas to be exported from Australia must be isolated from non-export koalas for a minimum of 45 days prior to export. If more than one animal is being exported, they should preferably be housed separately in a manner that would prevent transmission of pathogens between animals. The animals may be housed in a group, however should an animal fail pre-export health screening due to the detection of an infectious disease, it may preclude the others from being exported.
- 2.2 Within the period of isolation, each koala must be examined under chemical restraint by a veterinarian experienced in the care and treatment of koalas. There must be a minimum of two (2) such examinations with no less than twenty-one (21) days between each

examination. The examinations should be conducted early in the isolation period to ensure that results are available well before the export date.²

- 2.3 Each koala to be exported must be implanted with a microchip/transponder identification system. The identification system must record, at a minimum, a unique identification number for the animal. Details of the data recorded on the implant must be supplied to DEWHA.
- 2.4 A Certificate of Health issued by the examining veterinarian in respect of each koala to be exported must be provided to DEWHA before the animal is exported³.
- 2.5 The Certificate shall indicate:
- a) age (or where age is unknown, estimated age based on tooth wear);
 - b) sex
 - c) the average weight and body condition (using a published body condition index system) based on measurements taken every seven days during isolation⁴. An interpretation of any significant changes should be given;
 - d) condition of teeth;
 - e) the results of two intestinal parasite examinations, and the name and amount of drugs given if the results are positive;
 - f) the results of two complete haematological and serum biochemical examinations, carried out on 2 occasions no less than 21 days apart with comments on interpretation;
 - g) the results of antigen tests for likely viruses pathogenic organisms or other pathogenic organisms e.g. Cryptococcus, carried out on 2 occasions no less than 21 days apart
 - h) that the koala has had no history of chlamydiosis and has not been in contact with koalas showing signs of, or diagnosed with chlamydiosis within the previous 12 months. Each koala for export must have been tested twice with negative results no less than 21 days apart using testing techniques as advised by a veterinarian. experienced in the care and treatment of koalas.
 - i) that the koala does not have any unresolved health problems (a medical record for the animal must be supplied to the receiving institution and to DEWHA);
 - j) that the koala is not caring for or carrying young;
 - k) that the koala is free from clinical signs of disease or abnormalities; and

² It is recommended that when selecting animals for export prior to isolation that they are screened as per this protocol to minimise the risk of selecting animals that may fail pre-export health screening.

³ It is the responsibility of the exporting institution to ensure that all aspects of the transaction are carefully planned and coordinated well in advance of the export.

⁴ Relevant personnel, other than the veterinarian, such as the appropriate keeper or other trained staff may carry out these measurements during the course of isolation.

3. TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 During transfer to and from the airport, the koalas must be accompanied by personnel familiar with the individual animals being transferred. If long stopovers or delays are anticipated during transfer, provisions should be made to have personnel accompanying the animals on the entire trip.

Note: If it is intended that the accompanying personnel will be staff from the overseas receiving institution, then approval will be required from DEWHA. This approval will only be given where the personnel spend time in Australia with the individual animals prior to departure AND

- the receiving institution currently houses koalas OR
- the selected personnel are experienced in koala care

- 3.2 Fresh browse is to be made available upon disembarkation at destination.
- 3.3 All available medical and species management documentation must either accompany the animals or be sent to the receiving institution zoo prior to export.
- 3.4 Koalas must not be removed from the crates or handled in transit unless it is considered essential.
- 3.5 Noise, and the time from crating to destination, must be kept to the absolute minimum.
- 3.6 The most direct route possible is to be taken when transferring animals.

4. CRATES/BOXES

- 4.1 Koalas must be transported individually in solid framed crates measuring at least 85cm high x 70cm wide x 95cm in length. The crates must have removable, leak-proof drop trays fitted at the base. Each crate must be fitted with a sturdy wooden resting branch providing at least two forks.
- 4.2 Crates should have locks on them with a set of keys for both the sending and recipient zoos receiving institutions, and any accompanying staff.
- 4.3 Koalas must not be subjected to temperatures greater than 25°C or less than 10°C during the transfer, including during plane changes and stopovers.
- 4.4 Koalas must be accompanied on the journey by sufficient leaves on which they are normally fed. The leaves are to be left on the stem and the base of the stem must be cut under water and remain in water or have the cut end sealed. Sufficient leaves must be placed in the cage with the koala for the journey and are to be replaced as required during the journey. Note: The applicant should include *Eucalypt spp* on their permit application so that the leaves are listed on the export permit.

5. ACCLIMATISATION

- 5.1 The personnel accompanying the koalas or meeting the koalas upon their arrival at their destination must remain with the receiving institution for the period required for acclimatisation of the koalas.
- 5.2 The length of the period of acclimatisation shall be determined by the exporting zoo, but will not be less than ten (10) days.
- 5.3 The accompanying personnel shall remain at the receiving facility until satisfied that the responsible keeping staff are competent in husbandry and veterinary care of the koalas, providing extra training if required.
- 5.4 Prior to the transfer of the koalas, the Australian exporter must make a contingency plan to ensure that, *should the need arise*, it is able to provide an adequate supply of eucalypt leaves of appropriate species from Australia during the acclimatisation phase or until the koalas are readily eating leaves grown locally by the overseas receiving institution or other agency approved by the Australian exporter and DEWHA. Note: If leaves are to be sent in a separate shipment to the koalas, the exporter will need to submit a separate permit application form for the export of the leaves.
- 5.5 During the period in which the koalas are becoming acclimatised to the receiving institution, the receiving institution must ensure that:
 - a) public display involving the animals not occur until at least 48 hours after the koala has been released into its exhibit;
 - b) the ambient temperature remains between 10°C and 25°C;
 - c) appropriate acclimatisation criteria, as agreed to by the exporter, receiving institution and DEWHA and based on husbandry protocols, are established and monitored;
 - d) a high proportion of the leaves of staple species, provided to the koalas, are young tip growth of the species on which the koalas have usually been fed; and
 - e) males and females are separated during acclimatisation to minimise stress.

6. RECEIVING INSTITUTION – EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 The receiving institution must have a suitable enclosure for the koalas, ensuring that the following parameters have been addressed:
 - a) prevention of escape by koalas;
 - b) protection of the koalas against interference from other animals and the public;
 - c) shade for koalas during the hot parts of the day;
 - d) shelter from strong or cold winds;

- e) resting branches with at least two forks per koala (forks to be a minimum of 1.8 metres above ground level and at least 1 metre apart); and
- f) a rest area within the enclosure where the animal is protected from extreme weather conditions.

7. RECEIVING INSTITUTION – FOOD SUPPLY

- 7.1 Koalas require a substantial amount of fresh eucalypt leaves daily for their healthy maintenance in captivity. The exporter is to provide a list of the preferred Eucalypt species and consumption rates for the koalas being exported to the receiving institution a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the shipment.
- 7.2 Prior to the shipment of the koalas, the receiving institution must demonstrate guaranteed access to a plantation of feed eucalypts sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed colony. To ensure that access is guaranteed, the receiving institution must either own the supply or provide evidence that their designated supplier is capable of providing an adequate, continuous supply (examples of suitable evidence include contracts or other signed documents from suppliers and proof that the supplier has the capacity to maintain supply). Refer to the ARAZPA Koala Captive Husbandry Guidelines or to expert advice for further information on establishing a plantation.
- 7.3 The receiving institution must provide evidence that it has a guaranteed supply of fresh leaves from at least five (5) of the appropriate Eucalypt species listed in Appendix A. At least four of the five eucalypts selected must be staple diet species and must be the species on which the koalas to be exported are usually fed. The receiving institution must be able to demonstrate that it can provide an adequate supply of leaves of the staple diet species and some leaves of other species on a **daily basis**. Both young and mature leaves should be provided whenever possible.
- 7.4 Frequency of leaf cutting and the operation of leaf storage facilities must ensure the koalas receive palatable, uncontaminated, nutritionally adequate food leaves.
- 7.5 Fresh food in the form of acceptable browse species is to be provided within reach of koalas sitting in the resting forks. This browse must be secured with the cut ends in clean water and must be replaced at least once daily.
- 7.6 The receiving institution will need to identify contingency plans for alternative supplies of eucalypts in the event of access to the usual supply being interrupted by transport stoppages or damage by fire, flood or other natural disasters. An emergency supply capable of providing the animals daily browse until usual supplies resume is to be reliably available to the receiving institution and be available by more than a single method of transport.
- 7.7 The receiving institution must provide koalas with access to water at all times.

8. RECEIVING INSTITUTION – STAFFING

- 8.1 The receiving institution must demonstrate access to a full time veterinarian trained in all aspects of koala management, husbandry and veterinary procedures.
- 8.2 If the receiving institution does not currently house koalas, it must send to the exporting facility sufficient staff to be properly trained in koala management prior to any shipment taking place. A veterinarian must be trained at the exporter facility for a minimum of one month. The keepers must be trained for a minimum of 2 months. A minimum of one veterinarian and two keepers must be trained.

9. GENERAL ITEMS

- 9.1 Arrangements must be made between the receiving institution and the exporter, sufficient to ensure the establishment and maintenance of a close liaison and regular communication on matters affecting the management and health of the koalas in the overseas receiving institution's facilities.
- 9.2 The overseas receiving institution is required to enter into a legally enforceable agreement (Ambassador Agreement). This document is a three-way agreement between the overseas receiving institution, the Australian exporter and DEWHA and stipulates a number of conditions that must be met and maintained for the duration of the lives of the koalas and any progeny. Note: The Ambassador Agreement also covers any koalas already held by the receiving institution.

Appendix A

Eucalypt Species

An institution applying for a permit to exhibit koalas must satisfy DEWHA that it has guaranteed access to adequate fresh supplies of eucalypt leaves from at least five suitable koala food tree species.

1. Koalas of NSW origin

Eucalypt species suitable for koalas from New South Wales include:

<i>E. amplifolia</i>	cabbage gum
<i>E. acmenoides</i>	white mahogany
<i>E. botryoides</i>	bangalay
<i>E. canaliculata</i>	large-fruited grey gum
<i>E. camaldulensis</i>	river red gum
<i>E. crebra</i>	narrow-leaved red ironbark
<i>E. eximia</i>	yellow bloodwood
<i>E. eugenioides</i>	thin-leaved stringybark
<i>E. globulus</i>	Tasmanian blue gum
<i>E. gummifera</i>	red bloodwood
<i>E. globoidea</i>	white stringybark
<i>E. haemastoma</i>	scribbly gum
<i>E. maculata</i>	spotted gum
<i>E. maidenii</i>	maidens gum
<i>E. mannifera</i>	mottled gum
<i>E. microcorys</i>	tallowwood
<i>E. moluccana</i>	gum-topped or grey box
<i>E. nicholii</i>	narrow-leaved black peppermint
<i>E. obliqua</i>	messmate stringybark
<i>E. oblonga</i>	narrow-leaved stringybark
<i>E. paniculata</i>	grey ironbark
<i>E. parramattensis</i>	drooping red gum
<i>E. pilularis</i>	blackbutt
<i>E. piperita</i>	Sydney peppermint
<i>E. propinqua</i>	mall-fruited grey gum
<i>E. punctata</i>	large-fruited grey gum
<i>E. rossii</i>	scribbly gum
<i>E. resinifera</i>	red stringybark or red mahogany
<i>E. robusta</i>	swamp mahogany or swamp messmate
<i>E. saligna</i>	Sydney blue gum
<i>E. scoparia</i>	Wallangarra white gum
<i>E. sideroxylon</i>	red ironbark or mugga
<i>E. tereticornis</i>	Queensland blue or forest red gum
<i>E. viminalis</i>	ribbon or manna gum

Reference: Taronga Zoo

2. Koalas of Queensland origin

Eucalypt species suitable for koalas from Queensland include:

<i>E. camaldulensis</i>	river red gum
<i>E. crebra</i>	narrow-leaved red ironbark
<i>E. drepanophylla</i>	grey ironbark
<i>E. dunnii</i>	Dunn's white gum
<i>E. exserta</i>	Queensland peppermint
<i>E. grandis</i>	flooded or rose gum
<i>E. henryi</i>	large-leave spotted gum
<i>E. maculata</i>	spotted gum
<i>E. major</i>	grey gum
<i>E. melliodora</i>	yellow box
<i>E. microcorys</i>	tallowwood
<i>E. moluccana</i>	gum-topped or grey box
<i>E. nicholii</i>	narrow-leaved black peppermint
<i>E. ochrophloia</i>	yapunyah
<i>E. pellita</i>	large fruited red mahogany
<i>E. pilularis</i>	blackbutt
<i>E. populnea</i>	poplar or bimble box
<i>E. propinqua</i>	small-fruited grey gum
<i>E. punctata</i>	large-fruited grey gum
<i>E. resinifera</i>	red stringybark or red mahogany
<i>E. robusta</i>	swamp mahogany or swamp messmate
<i>E. saligna</i>	Sydney blue gum
<i>E. seeana</i>	narrow-leaved grey or narrow-leaved red gum
<i>E. sideroxylon</i>	red ironbark or mugga
<i>E. signata</i>	scribbly gum
<i>E. tereticornis</i>	Queensland blue or Forest red gum
<i>E. viminalis</i>	ribbon or manna gum
<i>Lophosternon confertus</i>	brush, pink or Queensland box

Reference: Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary and Currumbin Sanctuary

3. Koalas of Victorian and South Australian origin

Eucalypt species suitable for koalas from Victoria and South Australia include:

<i>E. botryoides</i>	southern mahogany
<i>E. baxteri</i>	Brown Stringybark
<i>E. camaldulensis</i>	river red gum
<i>E. conica</i>	apple box
<i>E. cypellocarpa</i>	mountain grey gum
<i>E. fastigata</i>	brown barrel
<i>E. globulus</i>	Tasmanian blue gum
<i>E. goniocalyx</i>	long-leafed box
<i>E. grandis</i>	flooded or rose gum
<i>E. leucoxylon</i>	S.A. Blue Gum
<i>E. macrohyncha</i>	red stringybark
<i>E. melliodora</i>	yellow box
<i>E. nicholii</i>	narrow-leaved black peppermint
<i>E. obliqua</i>	messmate stringybark
<i>E. ovata</i>	swamp gum
<i>E. punctata</i>	large-fruited grey gum
<i>E. radiata</i>	narrow leaf peppermint
<i>E. robusta</i>	swamp mahogany or swamp messmate
<i>E. rubida</i>	candle bark
<i>E. saligna</i>	Sydney blue gum
<i>E. tereticornis</i>	Queensland blue or forest red gum
<i>E. viminalis</i>	ribbon or manna gum

Reference: Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary and Cleland Wildlife Park.

Appendix B Checklist for Satisfying Conditions

This checklist is designed for the use of applicants to ensure that all conditions have been met. Items in **bold** indicate where information must be supplied to DEWHA. Required information will also be requested on Supplementary Form G (Koala Specific Version) to the Permit Application (excepting the Ambassador Agreement, which is referred to on Supplementary Form C).

1. SELECTION OF EXPORT STOCK

Koalas within optimum age range (1.1a)

OR

Justification provided for selection outside optimum range

Captive Bred koalas selected (1.1b)

OR

Wild origin koalas selected (must be accompanied by 'exceptional case' justification and information on age, time in captivity and circumstances of removal from the wild) (1.1 c & d)

All koalas selected free from dependent or pouch young (1.2)

Koalas not to form part of a breeding group (1.3)

OR

Koalas genetically unrelated to others in breeding group

Information on age, origin, presence of young and breeding plans provided to DEWHA.

2. PRE EXPORT REQUIREMENTS

Quarantine Conditions met (2.1)

Two or more veterinary examinations performed (2.2)

Certificate of Health, satisfying all relevant conditions, supplied to DEWHA (2.3 & 2.4)

Microchip implanted in each animal to be transferred and microchip data supplied to DEWHA (2.5)

3. TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

Details of any personnel selected to accompany koalas supplied to DEWHA (3.1)

- Personnel familiar with transit and post-flight conditions (3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4)
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4. CRATES/BOXES

- Details of crates supplied to DEWHA (4.1)
- Eucalypt spp for journey included on permit application (4.4)
-

5. ACCLIMATISATION

- Personnel accompanying koalas familiar with acclimatisation conditions (5.1, 5.2, 5.3 & 5.5)
- Arrangements made for supply of eucalypts to be provided by exporter if requested (5.4)
- Acclimatisation criteria agreed to by exporter and receiving institution and submitted to DEWHA (5.5c)
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6. RECEIVING INSTITUTION – EXHIBIT

- Supplementary Form G Questions on Security and Facilities completed and submitted to DEWHA, demonstrating that the receiving institution's facilities are adequate for:
- Prevention of escape (6.1a)
 - Protection of Koalas (6.1b)
 - Shade (6.1c)
 - Shelter (6.1d)
 - Resting branches (6.1e)
 - Temperature range (6.1f)
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7. RECEIVING INSTITUTION – FOOD SUPPLY

- List of food species and quantities supplied to receiving institution by exporter (7.1)
- Supplementary Form G Questions on Food and Management completed and submitted to DEWHA, demonstrating that the receiving institution has adequate:
- Access to Eucalypt plantations (with evidence of guaranteed supply) (7.2)
 - Capacity to supply 5 appropriate species, including 4 usual staple diet species (7.3)
 - Leaf cutting, storage and feeding facilities (7.4 & 7.5)
 - Contingency plans for emergency supply (7.6)
 - Access to water and has met mineral salt needs (7.7)
-

8. RECEIVING INSTITUTION - STAFFING

- Supplementary Form G Questions on Staffing completed and submitted to DEWHA, demonstrating that the receiving institution has:**
 - 2 keepers on staff with sufficient koala experience or with training at exporter facility (8.2)
 - Access to 1 veterinarian with sufficient koala experience or with training at exporter facility (8.1 & 8.2)
-

9. GENERAL ITEMS

- Liaison and communication arrangements made between the receiving institution and exporter

- Ambassador Agreement signed by exporter, receiving institution and DEWHA**