



Information and Support Package

Koala Safe Spaces

A competition for youth and community
in the MidCoast Local Government Area



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Competition Summary

Please read all of this information as well as the specific details for each category further down in the package.

1. This Support Package is for the three live S4P competitions in the MidCoast LGA in May 2024. It contains information about the competition categories, and the judging criteria; it also provides some links to articles relevant to the theme.
2. The competition for schools in the northern part of the LGA will be held on 10 May 2024 at MidCoast Christian College, 423 Kolodong Rd, Taree
The competition for schools in the southern part of the LGA will be held on 17 May 2024 at Forster Civic Centre – 4 Lake St. Forster
The competition for the community will be held on 1 June 2024 at Forster Civic Centre –4 Lake St. Forster
3. Registration for the events is essential. For all events, the closing registration day is Tuesday 30 April.
4. The topic for the competition is Koala Safe Spaces. All entries and performances must focus on this topic.
5. The school-based competitions are for youth aged 10-18. The community competition is for all residents of the MidCoast LGA. Participation is free.
6. There are four competition categories:
 - **Speaking** – prepared speeches of up to 3mins.
 - **Writing** – poetry or short story. Maximum 500 words
 - **Visual Arts** – a range of materials/ styles can be used.
 - **Drama** – a performance of up to 5mins. Maximum number of actors is 4.
7. Research is vital. This package contains links to useful articles and programs and talks. All participants are encouraged to do their own research. Check the council website and council's broader program on protecting koalas and koala habitats.
8. Participants are to produce or present items that are original. They are invited to make their work quirky. It must have an impact on the audience and readers.
9. By participating in the events, participants give permission for the following:
 - By Participating in the events, participants give permission for their entries to be placed on the Speaking 4 the Planet and/or MidCoast Council websites and/or social media (including YouTube).
 - This permission extends to authorising MidCoast Council and S4P using any photos or videos on their website/s or social media for promotional purposes before, during and after the events.
10. By providing the permissions above, the participant understands they will not obtain any remuneration from either S4P or MidCoast Council.

If you have any questions about the competition, please contact MidCoast Council Koala Project Officer Caitlin Orr on koalasafespaces@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

Northern Region

The competition for schools in the northern part of the LGA will be held on 10 May 2024.
MidCoast Christian College, 423 Kolodong Rd, Taree



Southern Region

The competition for schools in the southern part of the LGA will be held on 17 May 2024.
Forster Civic Centre - 4 Lake St, Forster



Community

The competition for the community will be held on 1 June 2024.
Forster Civic Centre - 4 Lake St, Forster

Messages from MidCoast Council

Koala Safe Spaces

Council is pleased to be involved in the Speaking 4 the Planet event in 2024. Significantly, the event is focussed on Koalas and their conservation.

Our community has a strong connection with the Koala and our natural environment. The MidCoast is recognised and valued by residents and visitors for the quality and diversity of its natural landscapes. Speaking 4 the Planet is an arts-based approach to sustainability education that integrates art and science. We hope many people in our community, young or old, get involved. This could be via submissions of art, narrative or dramatic performances. There are many prizes to be won and your work may be exhibited. Most of all, you can be part of a community of interested people that are collaborating to make a difference.

The Koala is an indicator of the health of our environment and its plight is symbolic of the change and loss of biodiversity that we are experiencing. This Speaking 4 the Planet event allows all participants to learn and share, to seek out the wild spaces of the Koala and be inspired. It motivates us, as participants in this event to be grateful and hopeful, and boldly be involved in the design of a better future.

Adrian Panuccio, General Manager, MidCoast Council



The MidCoast is a diverse region that is highly valued for its natural environments and wildlife. Koalas are a landscape species covering a broad range of habitats across NSW, including many parts of the MidCoast Council area. This once abundant marsupial is now facing extinction in many parts of NSW and QLD. However, we have the chance to work together as a community to ensure that koalas can hold on and even thrive in many environments including urban, rural, and forested areas.

MidCoast Council is excited to be working with Speaking 4 the Planet as an opportunity to bring MidCoast communities together to share knowledge, experiences, and hope for the future as we work together to protect this iconic species.

Caitlin Orr, Koala Project Officer, MidCoast Council



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Prepared by **Phil Smith** and **Hanh Do**

With support from



<https://www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au>



<https://www.ssec.org.au>



<https://www.paddypallin.com.au>

S4P competitions are supported by the Australian Association for Environmental Education and the World Environmental Education Congress Secretariat



<https://www.aaee.org.au>



<https://weecnetwork.org>

Design and layout by **Petur Farkas**

1. Purpose of this booklet

Speaking 4 the Planet competitions create opportunities for participants to express their ideas for a better world. Participants are invited to prepare and deliver punchy, quirky, creative, and pointed submissions. They should seek to influence the thoughts, emotions, and actions of the audience.

This information package is designed to help participants prepare quality entries for the competition. It provides:

- Information on Speaking 4 the Planet and the competition categories
- Links to relevant websites and articles
- Judging criteria.

All participants are encouraged to research widely and build evidence-based and powerful messages.

Please read carefully the information about each competition category.

2. Registration

Registration is Essential.

Schools must register their students' participation by Tuesday 30 April.

To register, send the following information about each entry to koalasafespaces@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

- Which event location/s you are registering for
- Name of School
- Name and Year/Age of Student
- Competition category (students may select multiple)
- Title of submission
- Teacher and email contact details

MidCoast Council will contact each school regarding drop-off of materials on the day before the event.

Community must register their participation by Tuesday 30 April. To register, go to the Koala Safe Spaces website - [Koala Safe Spaces Program | Have Your Say \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.koalasafespaces.com.au).

Any participants under the age of 18 must have parent or guardian consent to register with their contact details provided at time of registration.

Privacy: This information is required to publish any photos or videos and it will not be used for any other purpose without seeking your consent, or as required by law. Your information will be retained in Council's Records Management System and disposed of in accordance with current legislation. Your personal information can be accessed and corrected at any time by contacting MidCoast Council.

For all enquiries, please email the team at koalasafespaces@midcoast.nsw.gov.au



3. Speaking 4 the planet: changing the world, one presentation at a time

Speaking 4 the Planet (S4P) is an arts-based approach to sustainability education. It is a competition for school students that invites students to express their views on matters related to the planet and the future – their future. S4P creates space and opportunities for young people to intertwine humanities and sciences, to philosophise about human actions, and to imagine a better world while standing deep in the science of the world they live in. Youth marches and student strikes are the very public faces of (climate change) protest. Speaking 4 the Planet is an equally powerful opportunity for students to speak up and advocate for a healthy future – for humans and all species, including koalas.

S4P events inspire young people to think creatively, critically, independently, and courageously; they create space for students to ask challenging questions. S4P creates opportunities for youth voice not silence. The sustainability changes that the world needs won't occur by following existing dogma and practices. New thinking is required. Youthful thinking is required. Speaking 4 the Planet is founded on the belief that science provides the information we need to achieve sustainability, and the arts deliver the vehicles for transformation. Science provides the data; the arts change the world.

Here's a video prepared to support the nomination of S4P for an international Earth Prize. It tells you more about the initiative and demonstrates some of the skills of the students.

[Advocates 4 the Earth - S4P](#)

Get inspired by last year's contestants

Anthony

<https://youtube.com/shorts/Kboj5Y85QU0?feature=share>

Ashwini

<https://youtu.be/hMMvHyZVsns>

Roseanna

<https://youtube.com/shorts/dbyOtQ2mDoU?feature=share>

4. Koalas and the Koala Safe Program

The MidCoast LGA has:

- a large variety of Koala feed trees
- 10 Areas of Regional Koala Significance as outlined by the NSW Koala Strategy
- some of the highest density koala populations in the country.

The NSW Government adopted the new Koala Strategy which aims to double the koala population by 2050 and has committed over \$193 million in funding to meet this goal.

MidCoast Council entered a four-year regional partnership, the MidCoast Regional Koala Partnership, to provide more habitat for koalas, support local community action, improve koala safety and health, and build our knowledge to improve koala conservation and created the Koala Safe Spaces program.

The Safe Spaces Program has been designed to try and create 'safe spaces' for koalas and here's how we are going to help:

- Conservation of priority koala habitat including corridors
- Creation of new koala habitat and corridors
- Restoration and linkage of koala habitats and corridors
- Elimination, reduction, or management of priority threats to koalas
- Community empowerment, education, and engagement
- Partnering with landholders to protect and restore koala habitat on private land
- Research to fill applied knowledge gaps, including – population dynamics, disease, genetic fitness and threat severity and management
- Vehicle strike mitigation.

Watch MidCoast's Regional Koala Partnership: www.youtube.com/watch?v=8j5W2weZqZA





Koalas are now officially an endangered species in New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. Koala numbers have dropped dramatically in recent years.

5. Competition categories and judging criteria

There are 4 categories in this competition. All submissions must focus on the competition topic, **Koala Safe Spaces**. Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- Koalas facing an uncertain future
- Our connections with koalas
- What do koalas mean to you?
- Experiences we have with koalas
- How koalas make us feel?
- What stories should we tell about koalas on their behalf?

Below is information about each of the competition categories. Please read it carefully.

The judging criteria are also included. **Please note that specialists in each of the competition categories will judge the submissions.**

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

An online information session for teachers/schools will be held at 3.30pm on Wednesday 6 March. To register your interest, contact Caitlin Orr at koalasafespaces@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

Public Speaking

Council will arrange a special, online coaching session on public speaking for students if there is enough interest. To express interest, please let Council know at koalasafespaces@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

SPEECH

Participants prepare and deliver a 3 minute speech on the competition topic. Remember to include something about your local region in the speech.

The speech is an opportunity for you to suggest innovative ways to raise awareness, influence policies and behaviours, and to keep spaces safe for koalas.

Speakers will need to state clearly the problem or issue being addressed. They will also need to make links between problems and solutions, and speakers should also use techniques of persuasion that can shift the way the audience thinks and feels about the issues. The time limit is important. Please avoid reading your speech.

Here are some public speaking tips: [Public Speaking Tips – Speaking 4 the Planet](#)

Here's an article with good advice on public speaking *Communication habits that can undermine women's power* [The communication habits that can undermine women's power – Speaking 4 the Planet](#)

Judging criteria

A small panel of judges will use the following criteria to judge the speeches and find a winner. You should use them in your preparation.

On topic.

Within the time limit.

Idea:

- Originality of idea.
- How the idea is developed.
- Encourages audiences to think or act.

Content:

- Clear communication of problem and solution that the idea is trying to address.
- Structure: coherent, logical, clear.

Choice of style:

- Engaging.
- Persuasive techniques.
- Body language appropriate to the speech.

WRITING

This category requires you to write either a poem or a short story. Both have a word limit of 500 words.

Remember to ensure your writing refers to koalas and safe spaces.

Here's a tip for writing: [Tips for Better Writing – Speaking 4 the Planet](#)

Judging criteria

A small panel of judges will use the following criteria to judge your writing submission. You should use them in your preparation.

On topic.

Within word limit. The writing must be prose.

Clarity of purpose.

Accuracy:

- Spelling.
- Grammar.
- Sentence structure.

Resolution Impact:

- Does the piece move the mind or imagination of the reader and prompt a response?

VISUAL ARTS

Artworks need to be related to the competition topic. Artworks can be paintings or drawings. Paint, charcoal, ink, graphite, pen, etc. may be used. You may wish to do a cartoon strip.

Maximum size is A2

If they are framed, they need to have D rings on the back.

Ensure your artwork is about the topic of koalas and let us know about your work with a short blurb of up to 50 words.

Artworks will be displayed at the competition. **Please bring your own easel if you can. We would love to have you come along to the day to discuss your work and see what others have produced.**

Here's an article that may be of interest: [Art can Change the World](#)

Judging criteria

Your artwork will be judged against these criteria. You should use them in your preparation.

On topic.

Concept:

- Visually engaging.
- Imaginative qualities evident.
- Theme confidently investigated.

Material Practice:

- Technically accomplished.
- Skilful interpretation via a selected medium.

Resolution:

- Successfully resolved.
- Clear communication of ideas.
- Creativity evident in finished artwork.



DRAMA

Maximum performance time is 5 minutes. Ensure your performance is about the topic. A maximum of 4 performers may take part. Note that your drama may include music, song and dance.

Theatre and drama have the ability to change people's minds and hearts. Theatre makes it possible for the members of the audience to empathize with the characters. Theatre can make the impersonal suddenly personal. It can help us understand and process complex emotions, learn empathy and understanding for others, and explore different perspectives and experiences.

Here's an article (with videoed interviews) considering if drama can change the world.

<https://howlround.com/can-theatre-change-world>

Here's a short talk on How Theatre can Change the world

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1Yg9sA5lxw>

Judging criteria

Your drama presentations will be judged against these criteria. You should use them in your preparation.

On time (up to 5mins)

Clear links to competition topic

Performance Skills

- Ability to use voice, movement, timing, and use of space effectively (as appropriate to the style of the piece).
- Ability to realise and sustain role or character as appropriate to the piece.

Message and meaning

- Clear intention and dramatic meaning.
- Sophistication of the message and meaning.

Group Equity


- Each performer equally contributing to performance.
- Ability of performers to work collaboratively.

Innovation and Flair

- Originality of the piece, characters, situations, and ideas.

Audience Engagement

- The extent to which the audience was entertained by, or made to think about, the issue presented.
- Appropriateness of the performance for the audience (choice of style and dramatic conventions).



Australia's climate has warmed by more than one degree Celsius over the past century, causing an increase in the frequency and intensity of heatwaves and droughts. Eight of Australia's ten warmest years on record have occurred since 2005.

6. Prizes & certificates

Prizes will be awarded to winners in each category.

All participants will receive a certificate and a gift bag from Council.

7. Resources.

All participants are urged to research the topic. This section contains some links to websites that will help in your preparation. Search for more.

MidCoast Council

[Koala Safe Spaces Program | Have Your Say \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[MidCoast and Port Stephens | Koala Country \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Media releases from Council

[Koala conservation in the spotlight - MidCoast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[Council consults community on draft Koala Strategy - MidCoast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[Communities band together to create koala safe spaces - MidCoast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[Tree giveaway for koalas - MidCoast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[Koalas are feeling the heat - MidCoast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[Scent dogs used to locate koala habitat on the MidCoast - MidCoast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[MidCoast Koala Festival - MidCoast Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Videos

[Introduction to our Koala Safe Spaces Program - YouTube](#)

[Report a Koala sighting - YouTube](#)

[How to spot a Koala \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Koala Country video](#)

Top Ten facts about Koalas

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/fascinating-facts/koala>

Ten interesting facts about Koalas

<https://www.wwf.org.au/blogs/10-interesting-facts-about-koalas/>

Did you know these things about koalas?

- Koalas are marsupials.
- The closest relative to the koala is the wombat and they have kept the same backwards pouch and cartilage at the end of their spine which helps to wedge between branches.
- Despite popular opinion, koalas regularly drink water as it rains from leaves as they eat, water flowing down the branch, and water pooling in trees or as puddles.
- The koala gut is full of bacteria that help digest the leaves it eats. If a koala does not have the bacteria that is needed for a specific species and region then they can't eat the leaves.
- While seen as solitary, koalas have strong family and community bonds that they maintain for their whole lives through often subtle interactions.
- Koalas sleep up to 20 hours per day.

Sustainable Development Goals

Protecting habitats and species is the focus of Sustainable Development Goal #15, Life on Land. Check out this specific goal and all the others – they are all connected!

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)