



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO 7 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

MID-NORTH COAST HEARINGS FOR INQUIRY INTO KOALA POPULATIONS AND HABITAT IN NEW SOUTH WALES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

31 January 2020

On Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 February, an Upper House Committee will travel to Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour to hold two hearings for the inquiry into koala populations and habitat in New South Wales.

The Chair of the committee, Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC said: "Following the devastation of the summer bushfires, the committee felt it essential to visit locations known for their koala populations. This will be the first opportunity for a NSW parliamentary inquiry to document the impact of the fires on koala populations and hear first-hand from the community about the effect of these fires – not only on koalas themselves, but also on their habitat. On 3 February, the committee will visit the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital, to speak directly with staff and volunteers about the bushfire recovery effort and koala rehabilitation. At that day's public hearing, the committee will hear from Dr Rebecca Montague-Drake, koala ecologist and President of Koala Recovery Partnership, in addition to the region's local councils, including Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey Shire and Bellingen Shire."

The Chair continued: "At the hearing on 4 February in Coffs Harbour, the committee will hear evidence from the authors of the original Coffs Harbour Koala Plan of Management, one of the few plans approved by the Department of Planning. Other witnesses include local environmental organisations, such as the Bellingen Environment Centre and Nambucca Valley Conservation Association, as well as Dr Michael Donovan, a representative of the Gumbaynggirr Nation. Coffs Harbour and Byron Shire councils will also speak to the committee on the approach to koala protection and conservation in their local government areas."

The inquiry is looking into the current status of koala populations and their habitat and focusing on the impacts and effectiveness of existing policies relating to land management reform, forestry and the environment.

The hearing on Monday 3 February will commence at 2:15 pm at the Glasshouse Port Macquarie. On Tuesday 4 February, the hearing will commence at 12:30 pm in the Rainbow Room, C.ex Coffs. Both hearings are open to the public.

The committee will also be visiting the Great Koala National Park Information Centre in Bellingen St, Urunga to hear about the proposal for the GKNP at 9:00 am on Tuesday, 4 February 2020.

For further information on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, and submissions received, please visit the committee's [website](#).

-ENDS-

For further information, please contact the office of Committee Chair, Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC, on (02) 9230 3771 or 0487 247 960.