

Question 1

The CHAIR: *Can I just check where that information has come from and how you know. What research has been done and monitoring post logging to find out that it is one koala. How do you know that?*

Mr NOACK: *I ask my members who are active there—ecologists, our members. I must say this too: We have got a terrific ecologist out there who has got all this information. He only just came back to work yesterday. I wanted him here at the hearing. If there is any more information that anyone requires I can make him available. But, yes, I got the information directly from ecologists that work in this who have been there for decades in Forestry and that is what they have told me.*

Mr KAMPER: *I should mention this is the public logging by our members who work for the Forestry Corporation and the New South Wales public service. I do not think any private logging, if that reflects on the private logging—*

The CHAIR: *No, it is logging in public native State forests—that is fine.*

Mr NOACK: *Yes.*

The CHAIR: *But over 30 years. That is a very big claim to make.*

Mr NOACK: *Yes.*

The CHAIR: *It would be good if you could provide—if you do not know it yourself—on notice the evidence of the monitoring post logging that has gone through all the coops to check that there have been no koalas found, and what that monitoring is.*

Mr NOACK: *Yes, I will do that.*

Q1 AWU response

Koala deaths have to be logged on the FCNSW harvesting site. Every incident is recorded and only one death of a Koala has been logged. In this case it was found to have a previous injury, so it was not established that the logging was in fact the cause of death.

Question 2

The CHAIR: *What are those buffers? You said that they provide buffers around a koala population; I think earlier evidence from Forestry Corporation was that it might avoid the tree if a koala is spotted in there. Can I just ask what the evidence is of what those buffers are that you are talking about and what a "koala population" means?*

Mr NOACK: *Yes. I do not want to guess on anything. We do have some figures on how many trees, which I got from one of my field officers the other day. That is why I was quite desperate to try to get our ecologist along. I am happy to take that on notice and get back and provide you with the full facts.*

The CHAIR: *Thank you very much.*

Q2 AWU response

When a Koala or evidence of a Koala (which includes indicators such as Koala scats and scratches) is spotted there is a 25 metre buffer placed around the tree. If a koala or evidence of Koalas are found, then the rules of the relevant Integrated Forestry operations Approval are implemented and applied.

In general, for harvesting on native forest, the rule set of conditions and protocols pertaining to the "Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval" are implemented and applied to how koalas are managed across State Forests.

The Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval is the new rule set for harvesting on State Forest on the coast and has recently replaced the Terms of Licence Under the Threatened Species Act 1995.

Contract Coordinators that work with the harvesting contractors and are responsible for the contractors day to day supervision. The Field Technicians mark up the forest ahead and leading up to harvesting. Harvesting Contractors also are responsible for working to the rules of the relevant Integrated Forestry Operations Approval.

Contract Coordinators, Field Technicians as well as Ecologists, who are working with the contractors and actively marking the bush and looking for koalas or signs or evidence of them.

Question 3

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: *I would like to talk about your discussion about roadkill and potentially koalas being impacted by roads. You talked about the importance of fencing and land bridges, both of which I could not agree with you more about. We actually had a look up at Coffs Harbour and at Port Macquarie and we saw a number of land bridges and a lot of fencing. In fact, there are hundreds of kilometres of fencing that Roads and Maritime Services has put in. I am really grateful that you support that project. What I did want to talk about, though, is the tunnels under the roads, which you have contended are not actually effective because koalas are trapped in them by dogs, which was your evidence in your opening statement.*

Mr NOACK: *Potentially.*

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: *No, you said definitively that is what happened. My question is, do you have any evidence for that?*

Mr NOACK: *Only that that is what field officers have told me.*

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: *Okay.*

Mr NOACK: *If you want me to provide some evidence I can take that on notice.*

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: *I would. That would be great, because it is the first that we have heard of it in any evidence over this quite long-running inquiry. It would be great if you could provide any evidence to substantiate that, because obviously we are keen for as many ways that we can deal with that as possible.*

Q3 AWU response

There is no technical evidence available in the public domain, given it is extremely difficult to track this behaviour in the absence of a surveillance initiative in these tunnels. This is based on the professional counsel of AWU Field Staff.

Question 4

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: *I just want to take you to a couple more points. One touches on something you raised about monitoring the accuracy of data. Does the AWU have any information on what the latest and greatest might be in terms of mapping and the tools used? We heard evidence earlier today of infrared drones being used from the United States, which seem to have some sort of future, depending on the amount of investment we put into accentuating that technology. Do you have a view on how that should happen or what sort of technology should be employed?*

Mr NOACK: *Essentially we are getting our people trained in drones now—it is not a bad technology. In terms of mapping where the koalas are, as I said, it is a difficult task. I think at the moment there are around 20 to 30 ecologists with the State forest now. They are the only ones in Australia who actually in a serious way monitor koala populations. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services rely on them. I mean, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services really needs to lift its game in terms of monitoring koalas. It should be doing more. We should have ecologists in NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services. Our view is: Put on more ecologists. If you want more information about what they actually do at the moment besides looking at drones, I can get more information from our ecologists and provide you with whatever you want in terms of what they actually do.*

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: *Okay, thanks, that might be helpful.*

Q4 AWU response

FCNSW staff use iPads, Forest Apps, and GIS. FCSNW technology is also used by the EPA

Question 5

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: *Can I just clarify which fire killed 1,000 koalas?*

Mr NOACK: *It starts with "W".*

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: *You can take it on notice.*

Mr NOACK: *No, I will take it back. It starts with "W". I keep forgetting it.*

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: *Not Wambelong?*

Mr NOACK: *I think it was. I think that was it. I will get back to you on that.*

Q5 AWU response

The bushfire at the Warrumbungle National Park which was handed over to from State Forests in around 2013/104, without staff. As a result a massive fire following the hand over saw a large fatality of the Koala population.

Question 6

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: *So the red gum national parks are being more managed, in your view?*

Mr NOACK: *Down in the western region?*

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: *Yes.*

Mr NOACK: *I will take that on notice.*

The CHAIR: *Order! Is that in relation to koalas? Are we digressing?*

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: *No, because there are koalas in the red gum forest and he is giving evidence about NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services management.*

Mr NOACK: *I do not have the information on that. I will get back to you on that.*

Q6 AWU response

The AWU did not provide any commentary or evidence in relation to the red gum national parks, and does not have any further comment to add.

Question 7

The CHAIR: Mr Noack, earlier you suggested—I think you said that NSW Forestry Corporation does not kill habitat and it does not kill koalas. Can you explain how it does not kill habitat when, in fact—you are aware of what the intensive logging zone is, for example, up in the North Coast region within the coastal integrated forestry operations approvals [IFOAs]?

Mr NOACK: I can get back to you on that. All I can do is restate what I said before about the 30-year history of logging—State forest has seen one koala come down with a tree. That is all I can say at this stage. We have ecologists in place who actively go out. Obviously, if you chop down a tree, it does make a change.

The CHAIR: You have come to this Committee making these very sweeping statements that the logging industry does not in anyway harm koalas, saying that only one koala has died in 30 years according to your evidence. I am now asking you about intensive harvesting which is up to 45 hectares of koala habitat being cleared. In fact, if a koala is spotted in a tree they may leave that tree and there is up to 10 to 20 feed trees within one hectare which can be up to 20 centimetres in diameter. In other words, within a hectare 80 to 90 percent of koala habitat can be cleared. So I will ask you again in terms of your evidence, do you still stand by your evidence that says Forestry Corporation of New South Wales does not kill habitat, knowing now what intensive logging is?

Mr NOACK: No, I will get back to you on intensive logging. But I stand by my statement that Forestry Corporation of New South Wales and our members do everything possible to ensure that habitat is saved.

The CHAIR: But when they log it, it is not saved.

Mr NOACK: I am sorry. What?

The CHAIR: Once it is logged, it is not saved. Because they do log habitat.

Mr NOACK: In terms of the intensive harvesting, I will get back to you on that. Alright?

Q7 AWU response

The AWU has no further comment on this.