

**Submission
No 112**

**INQUIRY INTO PERFORMANCE OF THE NSW
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY**

Name: Ms Meredith Stanton

Date received: 28/08/2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please strengthen the powers of the NSW EPA and increase resources for compliance monitoring across all sectors.

As a strong advocate for nature conservation I am increasingly frustrated by the inadequacy of forestry compliance in our state forests. The destruction of core koala habitat in Royal Camp state forest in NE NSW is only one of the many breaches noted by NGO's during logging by Forests NSW. Koala habitat and other threatened wildlife are constantly impacted by logging operations, road developments and housing estates because their protection is considered less important than 'business as usual'.

EPA's forestry officers do appear to be facilitating the destruction of threatened species habitat, despite being warned by concerned members of the public that logging operations are failing to adequately protect koala habitat and food trees.

If penalties for failing to search for koala scats were strengthened and core habitat mapped and valued our iconic koalas may have some chance of survival into the future.

The loss of hollow bearing habitat trees and a failure to retain mature eucalypt trees which will grow old and provide hollows when ancient trees fall or are destroyed by bushfires is also of great concern. The felling of mature trees for the timber industry needs to be balanced with the future needs of our wildlife, many of them reliant on hollows to breed and hibernate - cockatoos, parrots, gliders, possums etc.

Please ensure that EPA compliance units are fully funded to maintain adequate monitoring throughout NSW.

Increase penalties for non-compliance and strengthen the laws that protect our wildlife, land, water and forests.

New South Wales needs a fearless and independent Environment Protection Authority that puts the interests of the community and natural environment first.

Most importantly, it must be adequately resourced so that it can effectively meet its objectives and enforce compliance with conditions of licence or approval, defend regulatory policies and actions through law when required, or prosecute offenders.

Increased growth and industrial development are placing enormous pressure on the air we breathe, the water we drink and the ecosystems which support our well-being and survival.

The EPA has an important role to play in protecting, restoring and enhancing the quality of the environment in New South Wales. However a number of recent incidents highlight the EPA's failure to regulate or prosecute polluters and stop environmental breaches. Following these incidents there is strong public perception that the EPA has been captured by industry, and does not act in the public interest.

I look to this inquiry to address the specific concerns raised by the community and to make recommendations to ensure that the EPA is capable of putting the environment and healthy communities ahead of polluters.

The health of our environment and our public health must not be compromised for industry profits.

Yours sincerely,
Meredith Stanton