

**INQUIRY INTO KOALA POPULATIONS AND HABITAT IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I'd like to share my observation that private camping grounds and koala habitat are not compatible uses. A few years back I stayed overnight in a regional campground that contained koala habitat. The habitat area at the rear of the camping ground was signposted as "restricted" and had a chain across the dirt driveway to prevent vehicle access. As I went camping during the Christmas school holidays, the camp ground was full, so campers were being directed by the reception area to camp in the "overflow area" at the back i.e. the koala habitat.

I happened to set up my tent directly underneath a tree with a koala residing in it, as did many others, trying to avoid the basking heat of summer by setting up camp in the shade. I was amazed by the carry on that occurred all during the night. As koalas came down from the trees, or were lured down, they were chased around by children, they had torch lights shining in their faces, were petted, had their photos taken and were fed junk food by tourists! It was a disgrace and I lodged a complaint with Parks Victoria about the management of Bimbi Park at Cape Otway.

I don't know if there are any camping grounds adjoining koala habitat in NSW, although these are incompatible uses that likely would have caused undue stress to the koala population as they couldn't walk on the ground without being constantly harassed. Please consider whether there are any other similarly incompatible land uses that may adjoin koala habitat in NSW with a view to prohibiting these within an acceptable distance given that:

- ongoing government monitoring and policing of these areas is problematic,
- fines are unlikely to be issued or be a deterrent, and
- private land owners, managers and businesses can't be guaranteed to abide at all times by any government restrictions on their operations.

Supposedly your enquiry should also consider cross state border activities, as NSW koala populations could be impacted by policies and practices on land in adjoining states within proximity to NSW state borders.