

Submission
No 50

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

20.7.19

Dear Committee,

I have several points to make about the conservation of koalas.

1. “Positive influence: NSW Office of Environment and Heritage's urged attendees at the Koala symposium to not use negativity to harness community support.” I object to the OEH trying to spin optimism about the plight of our koalas, which admits are in a parlous state. We all need to face their imminent extinction especially when the NSW Government and Forest Corporation are trying to spin a positive and unrealistic picture of the future.
2. An example of this is in the list of experts invited to speak at the symposium in the Hello Koalas week. In the extensive list of speakers there were no environmental campaigners.
3. Most experts agree the main cause of koala numbers decreasing is removal of koala habitat, especially core koala habitat. The NSW Government is allowing the Department of Forestry to remove 142,000 ha. of our state forests from Taree to Grafton.
4. The demand for timber is not just for building, as suggested in the Forestry propaganda in their new television advertisement, but for the ever increasing Biomass plants at Bulahdelah, Herons Creek, Kempsey and Grafton. Single tree selection which was difficult to monitor has now become Every Single Tree, Industrial Logging or clearfell.
5. Curiously the diesel and bitumen plant exercise at Herons Creek is approved by ARENA despite widespread criticism of the concept as renewable despite the 100 year gap and the pollution.
6. Meanwhile Principal Research Scientist in the Forest Science Centre, NSW DPI is carrying out tagging of koalas to prove they can survive on small regrowth after their natural homes have been destroyed by this process. It is claimed that with the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital that they have proved koalas will roam up to 100 kms, not the 50 kms previously regarded as their limit.
Environmentalists point out that several studies have shown koalas prefer mature foodtrees and the fact that koalas have doubled their ranges more likely shows social collapse as koalas range further looking for food and mates. Environmentalists also dispute the evidence from Law's sound recordings proving greater numbers and are not yet aware of any peer reviews for this important work.

7. To make things even worse the NSW Government is looking to make hundreds of old growth trees “new” again and to allow logging of these most valuable trees upon which a whole range of animals including koalas depend.
8. The NSW LNP Government has been slated for ignoring huge areas on farms being cleared even before their new legislation was passed to increase habitat available for clearing. PNF on smaller coastal properties is also being encouraged by Forest Corp.
9. The new NSW Koala plan provides for areas of koala habitat to be saved in perpetuity with compensation to the owner. However shorter terms, say 15 years, are also funded. Therefore it seems obvious that owners can watch the trees grow even bigger over that term, and then log the lot under PNF and get increased timber profit while destroying connectivity and causing fragmentation.
10. In Port Macquarie recently there was a Land and Environment Court case which allowed a development to go ahead despite KPOM zoning banning development in that area. PMHC did not bother to change the new CKPoM after the ruling. It seems then that CKPoMs are worthless.
11. On that topic it seems MNC Councils are changing the name of the required Comprehensive KPOM to Coastal KPOM and looking only at land east of the Pacific Highway. Forestry to the west of the highway is almost free rein for loggers especially with proposed changes in law concerning people investigating breaches or protesting may be jailed. There seems something perverse about members of the public being jailed for trying to protect their state forests from loggers breaching the law.
12. As Justice Pepper declared on the NSW south coast the Forestry Corporation is a serial offender. Obviously the slap on the wrist does not bother Forest Corp nor the EPA despite breaches in the field being repeatedly brought to their attention as the individuals responsible do not pay the fine, we the public pay through subsidies to Forestry. The fines are minimal and should be increased and apply per tree, not for multiple trees.
13. The Biodiversity Conservation Act and Local Land Amendment Act are designed to avoid environmental constraints protecting habitat. Self-assessment is rubbish. For God’s sake when you have people prepared to shoot government officers why would any government allow people to decide whether they should be allowed to determine if they will make more money or not? Even if they tried most landowners could not detect and name scats and scratches.
14. The offset policy is so weak it should be scrapped. A tray of seedlings can be an offset for the removal of core habitat (a PMHC quote) even though it will take perhaps 100 years or more to make an

equivalent compensation. That compensation of course is 100% useless to the displaced koalas and their progeny. The no net loss is unachievable through the time gap, the species of trees and type of soil. The agent “replacing “ the habitat trees is required to plant 3:1 in many cases as it is recognise many may die. There is no compulsion to replace any plantations which are killed in increasingly frequent droughts and bushfire. It is just another example of a complicit government trying to satisfy the demands of landowners.

15. The RFAs should be repealed. Many environmentalists refused to engage in the current RFA development because they know it is a farce and the forestry industry and landowners will get what they want.
16. Wood chipping and Biomass are now one of greatest threats to forests and their biodiversity and the practice of industrial logging, burning to achieve monocultures of timber species, burning causing BMAD infections and weed growth such as lantana, wood chipping for export, and Biomass should be repealed in the RFAs.
17. The Koala Research Plan funded by the Government should be compelled to assess the affect of clearing and logging koala habitat which to the average person would appear to be the cause of most diseases and koala deaths through car strike and dog attack.
18. Planning for development as in SW Sydney and along the coast, as well as logging plans should prevent fragmentation and oases of populations of the living dead.
19. Studies of the effects of climate on local koala populations seem almost non-existent even though this animal and its food trees appear very vulnerable.
20. The number of overpasses on the Pacific Highway do not match the populations especially those adjoining logging operations often screened from roads by a 10m fence of mature trees.
21. The Great Koala National Park is an essential development.
22. Translocation is not an offset, it is a net loss. The Victorian example found losses of bewildered koalas trying to go back home ranged from 40% to 100% as they were prone to dog attack, car strike and diseases.
23. The government is guilty of lack of compliance and monitoring. Its sudden publicity effort is not matched by outcomes in the forest. It seems to be mostly propaganda as in the Ultimate Renewable advertising which points to house timber which does not compensate for the 100 year gap in growing the seedlings. It examples the industry as a great renewable resource and avoids even the mention of the biomass plants expanding everywhere. Pellets and woodchips burned in biomass operations here and exported are scientifically

rubbished as beneficial in all the latest studies including in the “Burned” film.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

For the koalas and their home,