

**Submission
No 81**

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

Name: Mr Mark Suttor

Date Received: 30 July 2019

Dear committee

I have lived on my 300acre farming property at Girralong in the Nambucca Valley for 40 years raising beef cattle and poultry. I am surrounded by State Forests and Juugawarri Nature Reserve and I like it that way. My surrounding catchment delivers me good quality water for stock and domestic purposes, but it also provides habitat for many species of native flora and fauna one of which is the koala. Over the years I have noticed fewer and fewer koalas calling during the breeding season. Most local property owners in my community recognise the multiple long term benefits of allowing the native forests to recover and grow to old age e ,water delivery, rain generation, carbon storage and draw down, healthy bush neighbouring farming land, tree hollows etc.

Properties up here are less intensively farmed than they used to be with gullies and steeper slopes no longer being routinely cleared and burnt. These areas were abandoned as economically unsustainable to keep clear, but despite the increasing native forest regeneration on local private properties and very limited private property logging, we are all noticing fewer koala sightings and calls. Why? We reckon its the intensive logging done by Forestry Corp in the public native forests to the immediate south of our properties in Buckrabendinni SF and Oakes SF, where mature grey gums and tallowwoods have been removed at an intensity never previously seen, even by the few old timers left. I don't want to see the koalas die out. They are an internationally recognised Aussie icon, and I see them as a bit of a litmus for the state of our forests.

I know koalas like the bigger tallowwoods and grey gums but there are fewer now so its little wonder there are fewer koalas about, with the way logging is done these days - way too hard. Forests can't come back from that and probably the koalas cant either - they cant just wait around for forests to recover or newly planted trees to grow. So the logging should stop. I fully support the creation of new protected areas for koalas like the Great Koala National Park - its a worthwhile idea that will also help our local economy heaps more that this short term pillaging of a public asset. I reckon more effort is needed across the board by governments at all levels to locate important koala areas and truely protect them. Non of this bio banking rubbish. Protect the areas where the koalas are living now and make sure there are enough connecting and recovering forests areas for the populations to stabilise and recover. That way future generations and tourists will be able to see koalas in the wild and other species will benefit from the protected areas too. Private logging is going too hard as well and should be much more tightly regulated.

We've hammered native vegetation since European settlement and with climate change bashing down the door it is time to tighten regulations not weaken them as has happened lately. There needs to be a very careful and thorough look into the laws relating to koalas and some brave decision made. There will be belly aching from the usual crowd that want to carry on with business as usual for short term financial gain, but aren't governments supposed to see the big picture and look into long term directions that protect our environment? After all we all depend on a healthy environment - its our life support system not just the koalas. Stop logging public native forests and base the timber industry on plantations. We must to protect whats left for koalas and all the other important services our native forests provide.

This inquiry is long overdue and very welcome, I hope that the outcomes will save our koala, because our little Aussie battler is worth saving!

Thanks for the chance to have a say.