

**Submission  
No 101**

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

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Rates of deforestation have tripled under the Berejiklian government and habitat loss is the number one threat to koalas. Koalas are being forced to spend more time on the ground searching for trees, where they are more susceptible to car strikes, dog attacks and stress-induced diseases.

Existing legislation does not stop trees from being cleared. We also know that all Koala problems stem from losing their homes.

NSW needs a Koala Protection Act; a simple a piece of national legislation that will focus on protecting trees, including habitats that are empty. Existing State and Federal legislation ironically focusses on the Koala itself, and the habitat is almost impossible to protect.

The Australian Koala Foundation has the precise list of trees covering the entire geographic range of the Koala. With a Koala Protection Act, we could argue that if those trees particular trees are present, then the answer to an application for development is NO. That is, unless an applicant for land clearing can prove that their actions will be benign to the landscape.

Good industry leaders should not be threatened by such sensible legislation.

If you are a Koala and lose your home, you have nothing to eat, and you are lost, leaving you more susceptible to threats such as cars and dogs.

Worse still, industry can currently be given permits to 'take' a Koala? This means that a company can accidentally kill a Koala during their operations and be exempt from prosecution. This would not be allowed with a Koala Protection Act.

The Koala Protection Act will also insist that the Koala should be treated with immense respect, and that every single tree on the Australian landscape needs to be protected; not only for the Koalas, but the millions of other species living there, including humans. Remember: 'No Tree No Me'.

The New South Wales and Australian Governments need to see Koalas as a national treasure, deserving of absolute protection and long term survival.

The AKF was successful in arguing to the Federal Government that the Koala should be listed as 'vulnerable' in 2012. Since that time nothing has changed, except the federal laws have been weakened at the behest of industry. A Recovery Plan was supposed to have been written and finished by 2014 and it is still nowhere to be seen.

It is clear that existing federal legislation is incapable of providing the level of protection needed to save the Koala.

The Koala Protection Act is absolutely necessary. I call on my State Government to support this by passing State legislation in kind and pressing our federal politicians support a National Act along the same lines.

Please hear our pleas for this amazing icon of our country.