

**Submission  
No 107**

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

**Organisation:** Bangalow Koalas

**Date Received:** 29 July 2019

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29<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC  
Chair – Inquiry into koala populations and habitat in NSW

Dear Ms. Faehrmann,

**Re: Submission to Inquiry into koala populations and habitat in NSW**

Founded in 2016, Bangalow Koalas is a community group devoted to protecting the village's unique koala population, thought to carry a gene pool that may help facilitate the species' future survival.

What started as a handful of concerned neighbours determined to prevent a 400-metre stretch of 30-year-old koala food trees from deteriorating or being forcibly removed, has grown into an active, change-creating community group with more than 100 members lead by President Linda Sparrow.

With a long-term goal of creating a Koala Wildlife Corridor to encourage koalas out of urban areas and away from threats, Bangalow Koalas has planted 13,500 trees in the last 18 months. By the end of 2019, 27,980 trees in total either planted or given away to interested landholders. We are aiming for 100,000 by 2025.

As a result, the corridor has already expanded and connected existing sections of koala habitat from Byron Bay and surrounds, across the hinterland out towards Repentance Creek and further westward. We are taking real action, achieving results. We can't wait for Governments to act. This is real community, on the ground action and it is inspiring to see so, so many individuals, and groups joining in.

As both the President of Bangalow Koalas and a trained rescuer for Friends of the Koala, I have seen first-hand what our koalas are up against. Visiting landholders across the shire and witnessing the deforestation and the effects it has on our koalas is both distressing and heartbreaking to see.

This time of the year is the worst, in the last month I have been called out to 3 dead males as a result of car strike. I urge the NSW Government to take real action to protect and save our koalas. If we can't save the most iconic animal in Australia there really is no hope for our environment and our native wildlife. It is imperative the following is done:

- Create the Great Koala National Park and implement other NPA reserve proposals presented to the Committee to protect koalas in north-east NSW—a region that will become more and more important as weather extremes make western areas less hospitable.

- Create a new national park in south-west Sydney to ensure rapid development does not come at the cost of koalas.
- Protect 'koala hubs' (areas identified by the Office of Environment and Heritage as particularly important for koalas) immediately on all land tenures.
- Identify and protect koala climate refugia as a matter of urgency.
- End industrialised logging on public land that destroys habitat quality for koalas and ensure Private Native Forestry is genuinely low-impact and selective.
- Protect known koala habitat from land clearing by identifying it as Category 2-sensitive land or Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value, and urgently require local governments to complete the mapping of koala habitat for holistic protection.
- Strengthen SEPP 44 (koala habitat protection) to ensure koala habitat is not destroyed by urban development

I don't have any more time for words as every single day of my life I have given up to saving and protecting koalas. Words mean nothing, only action can save them now. Please help us, help them.

Yours sincerely

Linda Sparrow  
President

Bangalow Koalas INC.

