

**Submission
No 112**

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

Name: Mr Bruce Aham

Date Received: 30 July 2019

Thank you for reading my submission. I have lived in NSW my entire life and I lived in the Campbelltown Camden region for 25 years. I moved to Campbelltown in 1976 for work. It was at this time that I discovered that I had an historical family connection to Mt Gilead. My ancestor, Charles Axam, was the lease holder and manager of Mt Gilead in the late 1880's. My father was researching our family tree at the time. We Axams are all related to Francis Axam, a feisty poacher, and to the black convicts who were on the First Fleet. Our family, though small in number, are very proud of our heritage and the contributions we have made to Australia over the years. It would be devastating for Mt Gilead to be sold off, carved up and turned into soulless suburbs that have overwhelmed areas like Narellan.

But I have been moved to make this submission because of my deep concern for our native koalas. As an Australian, I can't imagine our country driving these iconic gentle creatures into extinction. But that is what is happening. And it is Developments like the one proposed here, that are killing them off. Native vegetation corridors, climbing bridges and control fences simply don't work. They are tokens at best, designed to fool the public into thinking some strategy is in place.

As a working Geographer (with half a century of study and teaching) I know the koalas in these areas need one thing. Protected habitat. I call on your committee to examine carefully any measures government could make to buy back this area and make it a landmark conservation area for the koala population. Why? Chiefly because we have no moral right to destroy the other living creatures on this planet. Sir David Attenborough said this first, decades ago. But secondly, because pristine habitat can actually have sound economic value. Tourism, both local and foreign can bring millions into this state.

Housing developments on the edge of Sydney were seen decades ago as having very poor outcomes for our creeks, rivers and natural habitats. Plan after plan set out good principles and plan after plan gathered dust and was forgotten. I call on our government to look at the bigger picture - population growth in Sydney. This needs open and frank discussion.

I call for bold action. Norway has now banned deforestation. My call is for a similar ban in NSW. Let NSW be the green state. Please save our koalas.