

**Submission  
No 199**

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

**Name:** Miss Lucy Kelly

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Dear reader,

I want to express my concerns for koala welfare, which I don't think are being adequately met, now.

The most critical issue facing koalas is the failure to protect their habitat, given that the NSW Koala Strategy identifies habitat loss, connectivity, and fragmentation, as the key issues facing koalas. Koala habitat is being rampantly destroyed everywhere, including in New South Wales.

In order to address this, I think that the Biodiversity Conservation Act, and the Local Land Amendment Act, should each include provisions to: protect habitat; end self assessment for developers, which is open to terrible abuse, and has been terribly badly exploited by them; and to provide opportunities for legal challenges in the public interest.

I also think that native forests should be protected from logging, burning, and wood chipping. The economy should not be reliant upon destruction, especially of our environment, upon which the people and their wildlife depend! It should rely on constructive things, like greenhouse farming, which saves water, and on traditional farming, which uses the land less wastefully and more productively.

I am also concerned that there has been extensive dieback in NSW forests, which are koala habitat, and that this has been ignored.

Also, I am concerned about the grants which are provided by the government through the Koala Research Plan, which have been given to research into koala disease, translocation, and medicalisation, when the primary issue of concern regarding koala is that of koala habitat loss. As I said above, the NSW Koala Strategy identifies habitat loss, connectivity, and fragmentation, as the key issues facing koalas. Koalas, like all animals, die without their habitat, which provides food and shelter for them. Koalas, having been shown already to be unable to survive translocation, are entirely dependent on their present habitat. If it is disturbed enough, they sicken and die. Medicating them won't help, and researching this false hope only dishonestly pretends that it will. A certain stress level kills koalas, and they can't spend forever being medicated as a result. They must be afforded habitat. Therefore, the grant money is being wasted on futile research, and it should be used to save koala habitat, instead.

There are also conflicts of interest with the recipients of grants for research into saving koalas. The grants are given to people who are connected with koala habitat developments. Their interest is to work for the developments who also pay them, not for the koalas! Therefore, they should not have the grant funds!

Also, the southwest Sydney koala population is at serious risk as a result of major development plans. The Roads & Maritime Services/RMS has an appalling record of koala mortality, and currently rejects any community requests to install wildlife underpasses or overpasses. This condemns the largest remaining, healthy, and expanding koala population to extinction, as koalas will be trapped behind exclusion fences and will die there, as was shown by the Ballina Highway upgrade.

Also, a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Roads & Maritime Services failure to provide such overpasses and underpasses for koalas in the construction of the Pacific Highway Upgrade, with particular reference to the Ballina section, is overdue. Please get this inquiry started!

Also, the NSW Koala Strategy completely ignores the impacts of climate change on koalas, identified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as one of the ten most vulnerable species globally to climate change, and there are no climate change refugia, or koala national parks, in key areas. Please get these refuges and national parks set up, so that koalas can survive climate change!

I think there is a great need for the creation of a Great Koala National Park. This would be a great source of national pride, and a big tourist attraction, as well as, of course, helping to conserve koalas! Please get this national park set up!

I think that koala translocations must not be permitted, because they have a 98% failure rate! This has been shown by previous attempts to translocate koalas. Translocations are effectively a death sentence for koalas. They just don't work! Please establish this in law, and stop all further translocations!

Also, there have been severe cutbacks on the National Parks & Wildlife Service, including of rangers. Wildlife needs the care and protection of these services, and they should be well maintained, at all times!

Also, the Office of Environment & Heritage has been closed. This has impacted on the welfare of Australian wildlife, which now has effectively no legal protections, since there are no legal means by which its rights under law can be upheld. Wildlife in Australia is said to have the right to survive, but in fact every developer who wants to develop has been given the means to destroy wildlife habitat, which effectively allows it to be destroyed at will!

Please address these concerns and save Australia's wildlife, including its koalas.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Lucy Kelly.

You may publish my submission in full on the website, with my name included.