

**Submission
No 200**

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

Name: Ms Suzanne Whiteman

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Whom It May Concern

Thanks for your time in reading my letter - My name is Suzanne Whiteman - I am a resident/land holder - on Black Wall Range - for over thirty years

I have lived off the grid in nature with the 38 endangered species that used to call the Black Wall Range their home - and Ballina Koalas

Unfortunate that the New Pacific highway - was approved through the home of Ballinas nationally significant Koalas still in construction I have watched them suffer, many have died and starved to death - as pictured due to loss of their homes and habitat, on the move to relocate they also been attacked by dogs and cows - hit by cars when looking for a new home. Many were also killed in a fire - stuck behind the RMS - koala FENCE on Old Bagotville Road - Bagotville unable to escape they along with hundreds of other native animals perished - there was no chance they could survive stuck behind the Fence

The new highway is not necessarily the safest for road users, not necessarily the cheapest to construct but has been devastatingly destructive for our Koalas. They also receive a "cheap road pavement" which exposes the Koalas to twenty four hour noise and stress another total harsh change of environment for an already stressed and diminishing population.

It has been disappointing that there has been little support from the three levels of government

I believe more support and communication could have helped Ballinas koalas survive. There needs to be assistance for concerned residents - Access to bio diversity funding - from bodies such as the RMS access to information on what happens to Tree Grants and plantings - for example

We do believe that our local Council received federally funded (20 Million Tree Grants) and sold these Tree Plantings off to the RMS - which means that in the long run the Koalas affected by the New Pacific Highway Zone lost out again. I imagine this is legal but it should not be permitted to occur - when a forest is lost - and there is a chance there can be tree plantings to help Koalas cope - ? It should be of utmost importance to all levels of government.

Community have emailed and inquired many times as to the location of tree plantings, offering support and input into habitat replacement, we have also been lobbying for a quiet noise pavement to help koalas survive along the new highway with no response.

Disappointing that governments that receive funding for Koalas - example - "Ballina Koala Plan" - have not put the diminishing Koalas as a priority - community involvement could have helped in many ways.

I and all other residents living in the Ballina Koala corridor - were not offered to be part of any tree plantings on "private land"

None of us - were offered to be part of the "bio diversity" offsets from the RMS - these issues need to be addressed if Koalas are to survive in the future

I have attached picture of koala that turned up - starving and skinny - it I thought it was a possum it is the sunken eyes that get you - he was starving - with millions of dollars apparently spent how did it happen.

Specially as governments are contributing funds to projects that have negative impacts on Koalas and the environment the new Pacific Highway is an example where residents are expected to step in and take care of the wildlife and carry financial and emotional costs. - it is ironic that all levels of government spend big dollars talking about mental health, biodiversity, communication, consultation, indigenous and regional communities, but has ignored all these issues when it comes to impacted Koalas and the negative ripple affect on the community, required to beg and plead for issues relating to Ballinas Koalas to be addressed, many of my community including myself are now dealing with mental health issues.

The impact to the koala population is un acceptable and along with many breaches of conditions and non compliance I am very concerned about Ballina's remaining Koalas living along the RMS. Highway. Suggestion for the future is assuring an Accurate PVA - Dr Phil Miller from IFAW (2016) researched the PVA - we lobbied all levels of government and RMS - with no success - to redo the PVA many feeling horrified that koala population in the PVA was so inaccurate - We could not get anyone to count any Koalas at my place or on the Blackwall Range - We could not believe it - my property has been recently identified as " core primary koala habitat" by the NSW Biodiversity - Conservation Trust - all great - but way to late - for our Koalas. The PVA for future developments need to have the correct data. There has to be local community involvement and consultation and community feed back in areas to be included in future PVA and future planning for rehabilitating habitat - to help save koala populations in future infrastructure projects. I have witnessed personally many koala deaths that could have been avoided with correct planning assistance and communication and adequate support from governments. I have researched NSW koala populations and have included an example of a past submissions sent - this is not the first time development has had a detrimental affect on Koala populations - example - Pittwater's koalas pushed to the limit - from Port Stevens to Coffs Harbour Koalas are suffering - my letter is to lobby governments for future support and respect for communities who have to deal with these situations in the future

THANKS so much for your time -

Suzanne Whiteman

I am also able to be a witness and give permission for my letter to be published - sent in a separate email are photos and example of one of the many submissions - sent by my community with facts on Ballina's Koalas