

**Submission
No 203**

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

Name: Ms Anne Allen

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Submission re 'Koala populations and habitat in New South Wales'

To NSW legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No 7 -Planning and Environment

Attention: Committee Chair, Ms Cate Faehrmann

I'm writing this submission as a local resident of 30 years and landowner of northern NSW, east Tyagarah, Byron Shire. I'm a member of Gondwana Sanctuary Neighbourhood Association, a Community Title development which is being managed as a wildlife sanctuary and has restored koala habitat along Simpsons Creek on the 40ha property. A koala was recently sighted in a six- year-old tree in a koala habitat planted section along the creek.

Although I'm mindful of the statewide issues regarding koalas, I'll address the local issues with which I'm most familiar for this submission. Issues as follows:-

1. Impact of Pacific Highway

This has resulted in multiple koala deaths on the highway at Tyagarah and has split the koala colony, isolating the coastal strip koalas from those on the west of the highway. Mapping in the attached *Tyagarah Remnant Vegetation Management Plan 2013* shows the primary koala habitat on both sides of the highway. The isolation of the coastal koalas results in in-breeding and stress causing illness such as chlamydia. Koalas need to be able to move freely within the environment and west to east of the highway to establish healthy breeding colonies.

Recommendation: That rail and creek underpasses and culverts at Tyagarah be retrofitted as koala passages so that koalas can move freely between east and west of the highway. This would involve installing appropriate koala furniture, removing weed thickets which prevent free passage of koala and other obstacles such as barb-wire fencing. Koala food trees to be planted as a corridor leading into and out of the highway underpasses and culverts.

2. Loss of koala habitat

The Tyagarah area was extensively logged at the time of European settlement and in the 1980's supported large dairy farms. These have since been subdivided into lifestyle blocks and the area is now rural residential.

Recommendation: That the Simpsons Creek tributaries riparian zones be revegetated between St Helena and Brunswick Heads and include suitable koala food trees. The Simpsons Creek tributaries combine to form the south arm of the Brunswick River.

This revegetation would provide a koala and wildlife corridor and also mitigate the effects of climate change, reduce erosion and improve water quality in the Brunswick River.

3. Impact of wild dogs and foxes

Monitoring cameras have demonstrated that wild dogs and foxes frequent this east Tyagarah area.

These are a threat to koalas as koalas need to move on the ground between habitat areas.

Recommendation: Regular trapping programs for wild dogs and foxes be carried out in this area.

4. Road deaths of Koalas

Dead and injured koalas have been found on peripheral roads ie Grays Lane, Yarun Road and Gulgan road.

Recommendation: Install traffic calming devices on local peripheral roads such as Grays Lane and Yarun Road.

5. Need for local Koala Care Centre

Friends of the Koala are very supportive and have a koala care centre in Lismore.

However, it would assist the local koalas to have a koala care centre located within Byron Shire. This would reduce the time it takes to get an injured koala into care or to rescue a koala.

Recommendation: That a Koala Care Centre be established within Byron Shire.

Anne (Bela) Allen

(Permission given to publish submission)