

Submission
No 223

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

Name: Ms Kristine Mulder

Date Received: 1 August 2019

Dear Committee,

Thank you for your diligent review, please accept this letter as my submission to the inquiry into koala populations and habitat in New South Wales. I consent to the committee making this submission and my name public.

Our native Australian animals like the koalas have been struggling to find a home amongst the gum trees. With developments, land clearing and destruction of their habitat their populations are dropping. Often their searching for shelter is futile, and I believe that all residents of New South Wales need access to food, shelter, water and safety including koalas. So many native species have the same challenges as the koalas and are heading towards extinction.

We are all sharing this land and koalas have just as much right to have a space to live free from harassment, the threat of being run over, their tree food and home shelter being wiped out from logging interests, agricultural developments, pushing them off their home. They have no paper work nor voice to present their rightful claim for some land in which to live, thrive and be happy. Please be their voice.

Can we create koala sanctuaries or hubs, a Koala National Park even. We need visionary leaders that are focused on the bigger, long term picture and future of our country, our environment, the precious land in which we have a duty of care to protect, nurture and maintain. Economic development should not be the sole basis to make decisions that are for short term monetary gain for a few and a future scared for many by decisions that were detrimental in the long term. I urge the committee to look at all angles of vision, and thoroughly investigate options and solutions to give koalas and other iconic native animals a place to live, to look at transition options for the logging industry workers, energy generation that doesn't include destruction of forests and land.

We could make New South Wales a leader in establishing world class Habitat Sanctuaries and create low environmental impact Nature Tourism Hubs attached to the perimeters. Keeping the inner sanctum for the koalas free from vehicle access, only walking tracks in, that are open to tourists who sign up for a volunteer experience to assist in the land care and protection of the koalas habitat. Where ever koala communities reside even in the Sydney basin we must take responsibility to provide for them.

When people of other lands think of Australia often an image of a koala comes to their mind, lets make sure that an image of a koala in a photo in a book is not the only way to see one. It would be great if we could establish Koala Sanctuaries that are free from tourism and commercial interests but if it is a question of saving the koalas from extinction or accepting the destruction of their habitat for commercial economical gain then to allow some limited area in a sanctuary for nature tourism may be a better option.

Thank you for considering my submission and thoroughly investigating solutions for the care of Koalas for their benefit and the benefit of other native animals threatened with extinction.

Yours Sincerely,

Kristine Mulder