

**Submission
No 215**

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

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Thank you for provided the opportunity to comment on this very important issue.

One of the most significant threats facing the survival of koalas is the fragmentation of safe and connected habitats. Koalas also face death by disease, being hit by cars and other hazards.

Governments at all levels, Federal, State and Local Council have the responsibility to save our national treasure and I am increasingly concerned about the lack of concerted effort to address not only the threat of extinction to our Koala 's, but all of our native fauna and flora.

According to WWF conservation scientist Martin Taylor, government data revealed that Australia had the highest rate of native mammal extinction over the past 200 years. Australia has lost over 27 species and is the only developed country on a list of 11 deforestation hotspots.

The world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species, the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species, Australia has 86 animal species listed as Critically Endangered.

The Department of the Energy and Environment lists

Critically Endangered Endangered Vulnerable

• Mammals	10	37	60
• Birds	17	54	63
• Reptiles	10	20	31
• Frogs	15	10	12
• Fishes	7	19	24
• Other Animals	30	22	13

The Koala is listed as Vulnerable on both lists.

Protecting our wildlife will require a fundamental shift in both mindset and commitment. We need to reverse the loss in habitat, increase funding to the environmental funding and changes made to the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act.

The NSW Government's decision to scrap the Native Vegetation Act in August 2017, enabled farmers to clear vegetation of land unabated. This resulted in an 800% increase in land cleared in three years. It is estimated that approximately 3000 hectares of native koala habitat has been destroyed.

There are a number of actions that can be taken to ensure the safety of koalas and other native species. They include:

- Establishing the Great Koala National Park to provide koalas much needed habitat. A 315,000-hectare habitat could be created by adding 175,000 hectares of state forests in the Coffs Harbour area. There are a number of other sensitive koala habitats that need to be safeguarded.
- Establishment of a new national park in south-west Sydney to prevent the inappropriate housing development with little or no regard to vital habitats.
- Koalas in the Macarthur & Wollondilly areas. - The South Western koala colony will be destroyed by a residential development in the Mt. Gilead Estate.
- South West Sydney koalas are the only Chlamydia free and expanding koala population left in NSW and should not be endangered by roads or development for housing. Chlamydia is a stress response and loss of their homes is a stress trigger.
- Koalas will be trapped behind RMS's and Lendlease's exclusion fence with no ability to escape from bushfires or other catastrophes. They will be cut off from reaching prime koala habitat, ensuring the population will inevitably be lost. This is an officially sanctioned 'localized Koala extinction plan', solely designed to benefit a private developer at the cost of the survival of our most vulnerable national icon the 'Koala'.
- The soil types and trees within the Holsworthy Military Reserve are not the preferred type for koalas yet the soil along the ridge line produces trees that Koalas thrive on. (hence the population healthy, expanding & moving)
- Over 3.2 billion tourist dollars and 30,000 jobs are created each year but koalas are dying out in the wild if just one percent of this sum was directed into purchasing properties such as

Mount Gilead, koalas in South West Sydney would stand a chance of survival. Create long term jobs & bring in a lot of money to the community.

Protect koala hubs as identified by the Office of Environment and Heritage as particularly important for koalas immediately on all land tenures.

- Identify and protect koala climate refugia as a matter of urgency.
- Cease industrialised logging on public land that destroys habitat quality for koalas and ensure Private Native Forestry is genuinely low-impact and selective.
- Protect known koala habitat from land clearing by identifying it as Category 2-sensitive land or Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value, and urgently require local governments to complete the mapping of koala habitat for holistic protection.
- Strengthen SEPP 44 (koala habitat protection) to ensure koala habitat is not destroyed by urban development.
- Create wildlife bridges over busy highways to prevent death by car strikes, virtual fences to alert wildlife of oncoming cars and signage on roads to alert drivers that wildlife are in the area. Signs could also include contact numbers for wildlife emergency groups.
- Provide financial support for wildlife carers who work tirelessly and endlessly to save injured wildlife.
- Extend the subsidies provided to farmers in natural disasters to wildlife sanctuaries

Thank you for considering my comments.