

**Submission
No 217**

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

Name: Ms Elisabeth Nicolson

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a member of the general public in the Coffs Harbour region. I moved here 20 years ago and have been in love with the area ever since. I love it because of the beaches, the surfing, fishing, biking and hiking, climbing and canyoning. I love it because it offers many natural spaces for me to explore, contemplate in, be silent in and truly appreciate the magnificence of creation. Part of creation includes other species, not just me as a human, their wants, needs, inherent rights. Other species being alive and well also provides for me and my kind in terms of the essential elements of life- clean air, water and food. I don't know about you but I am unable to live without any of these.

Take for example the Koala. You may think that the well being of the koala has absolutely nothing to do with air, food or water for us as humans. This is a grave mistake and reflects Cartesian thinking which we must move away from. If you don't know what Cartesian thinking means it refers to the inherent tendency to break things down into parts and not think of the whole. I feel this is the biggest problem of our culture. We think in dollars, or rights, or soil, or food without seeing that the WHOLE THING is connected.

A koala is a keystone species. If its population is doing well it means a number of things including:- that there are sufficient trees around in good condition, that are well connected and offer a area large enough for young breeding males to find places to go. How do we get sufficient healthy trees? Well, that requires not just the trees themselves but an entire forest ecology- they need fungus in the soil to ensure nutrients and water are passed, they need a mid storey and ground cover and of course trees like any other plant require pollinators to ensure that their reproduction is enable. When it comes to key Koala food trees, this means that some key Eucalyptus pollinators are required- think includes arboreal mammals such as sugar gliders and greater gliders. Do you get where I am going with this? You can't just protect the koala, you need to protect the forests then the koalas will be well. This means large forested areas with excellent connectivity.

So what are the benefits of a well forested area to the average Joe? Our current economic system is incompetent in this regard. We are unable to value the role forests play in the following- catchment management and the provision of rain (i.e. clean and reliable drinking water), temperature control (essential for climate resilience in the future), the health of creatures like bees and birds (pollination and pest control i.e provision of food for me), OXYGEN (ah, try living without it),

I can find oodles of science to back up the above to paragraphs. But you don't seem to want the science on this topic which makes you hypocrites. On one hand you want the science when it comes to cancer or heart conditions- you go to a doctor (a professional in her field) get a diagnosis and do what she says. But when it comes to environmental science you pick and choose. You ignore the science that is a threat to your economic deals and growth based values system. You then get people with no specialty background to make diagnosis which are inaccurate and not peer reviewed and then you go with this. You would never do this with your personal health. You would get the best possible professional in their specialty field.

The bottom line is this- protect the forests and protect the koala. I am gravely concerned about the changes to the NSW RFAs and IFOA. I feel this inquiry should be aimed at them and not just the Koala. As mentioned above, care-take the forests and you care-take the Koala.

Why are you wasting time? Why are you allowing logging in coups like compartment 128 in the Kalang valley where Koalas are active (my friends photographed them yesterday) as well as other key species being present such as the Glossy Black cockatoo? What an absolute failure of governance!!!

I want you to tell me the following:-

1. How much money are you subsidising the NSW logging industry (i.e. Boral)?
2. Who are the owners and share holders of Boral and are any of them NSW parliamentarians or key office holders?
3. Where does the timber from our forests go? I want to know how much by quantity as a percentage goes to- **permanent** construction, furniture, paper, packing pallets or as chip for export as pulp?

What I am getting at is this:-

1. I believe that the current NSW government has a vested interest in continuing to allow logging in the North Coast forests despite this not being an economically viable option. They are trying to hide this because they do not want the public to know. They most likely have some kind of vested interest in protecting Boral. I want this publicly investigated. Yes I am suggesting corruption is involved.
2. I want a thorough investigation into the community information being provided by the NSW Government and NSW Forestry Corporation as to the details of the current forestry practices. Yes I am suggesting that they are full of both misinformation and blatant lies to mislead the public. This is morally reprehensible.
3. I believe logging can be sustainable as practiced in parts of Europe BUT not the way the NSW Forestry Corporation model demonstrates. I am especially concerned about the use of mechanisation and the rewriting of the RFAs and IFOAs.
4. I believe the NSW Government plans on selling Australian timbre to Europe as part of the biofuel movement which is clinically speaking- insane. IF you can find a sane angle as to why this is a good idea please let me know.
5. I want you to VALUE Australian hardwood timbre- put a proper market price on it, make it expensive so it is used in permanent construction ONLY not in any other use.
6. Make forestry a respectable profession for everyone involved and something we can be proud of for at least 8 generations.
7. Transition forestry industry workers to restoration work and the protection and well being of our carbon sinks.

I invite you all to come to Coffs Harbour and see what it is like on the ground. Come and I will show you some recent logging coups, some regrowth and some old growth. I will show you the loss of vegetation from logging, intensive agriculture (blue berries) and urban development and how the fragments of forest that koalas are supposed to live from is becoming ridiculous. I invite you to disprove all of the above. I wish I was dead wrong.

I invite you to think about what would be a course of action that would make your descendants proud and reflect your respect for the entirety of life.

Regards
Elisabeth.