

**Submission  
No 260**

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

**Name:** Mr Nigel Waters

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I urge the Committee to recommend major changes to NSW legislation, policies and practices to better ensure the survival of the koala populations of the Ste and specifically of Port Stephens area. Koalas are recognised as vulnerable throughout NSW, at risk from development, land-clearing and the ever-increasing impact of a growing human population, manifested in koala deaths from road traffic and dog attacks.

NSW planning and environmental protection laws are widely acknowledged as favouring development at the expense of the environment, and urgently need amendment to redress the balance.

I strongly support the detailed submissions from a number of Port Stephens voluntary groups including EcoNetwork Port Stephens, Port Stephens Koalas, the Mambo-Wanda Wetlands Conservation Group, and Port Stephens Greens.

Koala populations cannot survive through tokenistic protections and sporadic planting of koala feed trees. Scientific evidence suggests that a minimum area of koala habitat is required to support viable populations of the animals over the long term. Such 'hubs' must be identified and protected from further encroachment by development.

Land clearing laws have recently been significantly weakened and most recently, an amnesty from prosecution declared for those who illegally cleared land under the previous legislation - this is unacceptable.

Please take this opportunity to support the findings of previous reports and recommend strong protections for this iconic native animal.