

**Submission
No 268**

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

Name: Mrs Margaret Hession

Date Received: 2 August 2019

Dear Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I am concerned that the reporting timeframe of 2020 will mean that the healthy population of Campbelltown Koalas are already extinct due to policies including:

Three Cities Plan

'Strategic' Biodiversity offsetting

Decisions of the Independent Planning Commission

Failure of the Native Vegetation Panel to convene.

The NSW population of Koalas in general will be driven to extinction by:

*Government subsidy for IFOA agreements to make uneconomic industry have the impression of being economic (we should pay the industry to not cut down trees). Analysis exists within government on the uneconomic nature of subsidies to the forestry industry. The government doesn't want to shut it down despite this and would rather lose the Koala and our biodiversity that risk having to explain to a sector why the subsidy is no longer appropriate.

*Cost benefit analysis that doesn't capture the intrinsic value of our koala populations, and trees, and biodiversity (see point above about industry subsidies that don't capture the full costs of interventions).

* Land Clearing regulations that are ineffective and not enforced. Note the murder case for the land clearing inquiry - what incentive to do your job properly when it is the law of the frontier?

*No response to climate change bringing extended drought and bush fire risk that destroys habitats and animals

*Inadequate government funding for frontline wildlife carers who rely on charity or are self funded

*Poor Council planning regulations - dog attacks and urban sprawl

*Powerful developer lobby leading to all regulation being classes as 'green tape' instead of appropriate rules consistent with role for government and community expectations

*Mining approvals that are poorly regulated and don't take into account the full risks - including to habitat, species and to state finances re risk and remediation.

*'strategic' biodiversity assessment which is a governance risk and involves the government as a proponent accepting for itself a lower delivery objective 'adequate' compared to a non government proponent.

*Poor operation of the Biodiversity Conservation Trust - the government itself is clear that it is unable to secure connected valuable land through biodiversity offsetting unless a 'strategic' approach is taken without relying on the Biodiversity Assessment Methodology captured in legislation. 'Strategic' biodiversity offsetting where upfront government payment to meet the offsetting responsibilities of a developer has been shown to be inadequate - eg when applied to the North West Growth Area. However it is going to be applied again in Western Sydney. The 'strategic' approach results in government 'paying twice'. Once to pay the upfront costs of biodiversity offsetting which isn't then fully recouped over time; and secondly through loss of natural assets.

Koalas, habitat and wildlife are not valued. Extinction is inevitable. Piecemeal adhoc non enforced policies are not going to stop the land clearing that is driving extinction.