

**Submission
No 283**

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

Name: Ms Louise Krieger

Date Received: 2 August 2019

Dear Committee members,

I would like to make a submission regarding the management of koala populations and the destruction of their habitat in NSW. I consent to this submission and my name being made public.

It is disheartening to see reports of koala becoming increasingly likely to become extinct in the wild and I believe urgent action is required to address this crisis. Australians will be condemned internationally if we allow this species to continue to decline. At a 2018 wildlife conference held in Sydney I learned that the koala is estimated to be worth \$6 billion annually to the Australian economy. Sadly, the government's response to this was to allocate \$49 million with its left hand while the right hand signed in legislation to increase broad scale land clearing.

There are currently over ,000 species threatened with extinction in NSW and a million species at risk of extinction worldwide. Future generations will look at our actions and ask why we did nothing to avert this catastrophe.

The strategies developed by the NSW government to address the decline in koala populations are not working because they do not address the root of the problem, which is habitat destruction. I recently learned that koalas in Victoria have contracted mange and that the only known treatment for this horrific condition is lethal to koalas. I believe koalas are contracting mange because they are being forced to come down from the trees and travel overland to find food. If koalas become affected with mange the way wombats, the closest related species to koalas, have been, they will certainly be wiped out very swiftly.

I urge the Committee to ensure remaining koala habitat is protected from land clearing and fragmentation. It is disheartening to see that areas of core koala habitat continued to be logged and cleared for agriculture and development.

I ask the Committee to ensure the immediate and permanent protection of all existing koala habitat in NSW and expand areas of national park. I also ask that a plan is developed to end the logging of all native forests on public land.

I understand the NSW government is proposing to open vast areas of old growth native forests to logging on the NSW North Coast and I ask that this plan be stopped, with the area being protected.

All koala habitat must be safe from logging, agriculture and development if this species is to have any chance of survival. As a wildlife rescue volunteer I have seen first hand the damage caused by roads, farm and domestic animals and land clearing. I know that the numbers of animals being killed each year are not sustainable and that without urgent action this iconic species will be lost forever.

Yours faithfully,

Louise Krieger