

**Submission
No 304**

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

Name: Ms Corinne MacKenzie

Date Received: 2 August 2019

Dear Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to share my input on the very evident reasons koalas require protections that have been shamefully lacking to date.

Please accept this as my submission and note that I give consent to make this submission and my name public.

As you are well aware Koala populations are in serious crisis and urgent action is needed to ensure their survival in the wild for future generations.

- NSW and south Qld are the most dangerous regions for koalas.
- koala populations in NSW have overall almost halved in the last few years
- Behind the statistics this means that in some sites whole koala populations have been wiped out
- The main causes are land clearing for development, car strikes, dog attacks, fire and drought - all due to shameful human disregard, self interest and conflicts of interest by politicians and businesses.
- Australia has lost approx 80% of its eucalyptus trees in the last 200 years - these are food and shelter trees for koalas.

I would like to see the committee work together to identify and implement bold and holistic solutions to protect the future of our koalas.

Recently, the NSW Government recognised that koala populations are in steep decline and promised to develop a strategy to address this. However, this strategy and current government policy fails to address the number one threat facing koala populations: habitat loss and fragmentation.

An all-of-government approach which is unafraid of and does not simpere to big business etc is needed to actively address this key threat and secure remaining koala habitat on both public and private land. I urge the government to consider the following actions.

- Core koala habitat needs to be permanently protected by establishing a connected system of existing and new national parks including the Great Koala National Park in NSW.
- Similar protected areas of core koala habitat in other range states should be established and protected into the future. All koala habitat in public state forests needs to be permanently protected in the reserve network and koala habitat should be exempt from code-based clearing under the current legislation.
- Weak government proposals to open up thousands of hectares of old growth forests to logging on the NSW North Coast should be immediately rejected.
- An urgent transition plan needs to be developed to end the logging of native forests on public land.

- Koala habitat and connectivity in the Sydney Basin needs to be protected from development, particularly the large-scale housing development in the Campbelltown area which threatens one of the state's only recovering healthy koala populations.

- Wildlife corridors need to be restored to allow koalas and other animals to move freely about the landscape and prevent human-wildlife conflict. This could be achieved by purchasing private land, changing the tenure of public land, and restoring habitat. It can also be achieved through increased support of voluntary conservation initiatives such as Bangalow Koalas in the Northern Rivers, with whom IFAW is working to restore a koala corridor from Bangalow to Repentance Creek.

I urge you to work together to protect koalas for our future generations. Please don't let them go extinct on your watch. Their future is in your hands.