

**Submission
No 307**

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

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I run a local eco tourism business out of Byron Bay. One of my tours is the Wildlife Safari, where I take visitors out to see wildlife in their natural habitat the koalas are getting more challenging by the day, and why i explain why to my clients, they are gobsmacked that your government isn't doing all it can to protect koalas. Seeing them in the wild is one of the big drivers of their decision to come to Australia. So let's forget about the environmental reasons, because clearly the NSW government doesn't care about protecting the environment, let's look at the loss for tourism. Which makes up 12% of the revenue for the state and provides a lot more kids than the 400 that are employed by forestry. So look at the numbers, help tourism and protect koalas.

I believe that a key step to protecting koalas (like all species) is protecting their habitat. In particular we must:

Create the Great Koala National Park and implement other NPA reserve proposals presented to the Committee to protect koalas in north-east NSW—a region that will become more and more important as weather extremes make western areas less hospitable.

Create a new national park in south-west Sydney to ensure rapid development does not come at the cost of koalas.

Protect 'koala hubs' (areas identified by the Office of Environment and Heritage as particularly important for koalas) immediately on all land tenures.

Identify and protect koala climate refugia as a matter of urgency.

End industrialised logging on public land that destroys habitat quality for koalas and ensure Private Native Forestry is genuinely low-impact and selective.

Protect known koala habitat from land clearing by identifying it as Category 2-sensitive land or Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value, and urgently require local governments to complete the mapping of koala habitat for holistic protection.

Strengthen SEPP 44 (koala habitat protection) to ensure koala habitat is not destroyed by urban development.

If we can take these steps, koalas stand a chance of persisting for the long term in NSW. If we don't we'll oversee koala deaths and dwindling populations.