

**Submission
No 308**

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

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Submission to the NSW Inquiry into Koala Populations and Habitats

Dear Committee,

Please accept this letter as my submission to the Inquiry into Koala Populations and Habitats. I trust that the Inquiry can assist the NSW government implement necessary steps that will see koala declines reversed before it is too late.

Having been a resident of Byron Shire for just under 20 years now I have personally noted that in recent years the loss of Koalas to the Roads and LAND CLEARING is more prevalent than ever.

I have had the liberty to live on Possum Creek Road, Bangalow for a period of 12 months. In that time I was privy to regular Koala visitations. It was a sanctuary for a pair and their offspring. However, during that time I contacted our local Koala protection group as the male had been killed sadly, crossing the road not far from us on Hinterland Way.

This was devastating, it prompted us to join forces with other locals who care about our native Koalas. Over the months to follow, through the Bangalow Koala Group we invited University researchers and students to study the habitat (property) and its surrounds in hope that we as a community could create a safe haven - a safe passage from Bangalow to Lismore - a Koala corridor. The thing is... we need help, and this must come from our government.

It is important for the committee to realise that the extinction of koalas in NSW is possible if we do not urgently change course. However, this doesn't have to be the inevitable fate for koalas: we know the problems and we know the solutions. The government has the power to choose which future it wants for koalas.

Areas like Pittwater in Sydney and south-east NSW demonstrate what will happen if we fail to act: we will oversee dwindling populations, koala deaths and local extinctions. Protecting habitat is the first and most important step in protecting koalas. I therefore urge you to take the following action:

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.

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 and;

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

If we can implement these steps koalas stand a good chance of surviving in NSW. If we continue with business as usual, koalas will continue to die and to slide towards extinction. I urge you to secure the future of koalas by taking decisive action to protect habitat.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Stoykovich