

**Submission
No 317**

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

Name: Andris Abolins

Date Received: 26 July 2019

Submission to the Upper House inquiry into koala populations and habitat in New South Wales

Dear Committee,

Please accept this letter as my submission regarding the Inquiry into koala populations and habitat in New South Wales. I consent to the committee making both this submission and my name public.

Koala populations are in crisis and urgent action is needed to ensure future generations will be able to see these iconic species in the wild. Ensuring the survival of koalas, as well as over 1000 other species threatened with extinction in NSW, is an issue which must be beyond politics. It requires visionary leadership and lasting change. I therefore encourage the committee to work together to develop a cross-party consensus on genuine solutions to protect the future of our unique environment.

I call on the committee to prioritise solutions which prevent ongoing habitat destruction – to stop clearing for logging, agriculture, and infrastructure in habitats that have previously been mapped by the Office of Environment and Heritage.

By protecting the environment and restoring the native forests, we are not only saving the koalas, we are also restoring the natural balance in our environment. This in turn will save other populations including our own population. It is also essential for our wellbeing.

The NSW Parliament faces a choice: continue with business as usual and oversee the rapid decline and extinction of our iconic Australian flora and fauna, or make urgent changes to protect vital habitat and restore our native forests. I urge you to work together for this cause.

Yours Sincerely,

Andris Abolins