

**Submission  
No 29**

**INQUIRY INTO LOCAL LAND SERVICES AMENDMENT  
(MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2020**

**Name:** Dr Roslyn Irwin

**Date Received:** 8 February 2021

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**Committee Chair**  
**Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment**

Dear Cate Faehrmann,

I am a member of the Friends of the Koala Inc (FOK) in Lismore and was on its Management Committee from 2012, Vice President from 2013 to 2017 and President from 30 June 2017 until 14 August 2020. I'm well aware of legislation impacting on koalas, and as you would know, my most recent submission was to the *Inquiry into koala populations and habitat in NSW* that you chaired on behalf of FOK.

My husband and I have a property which contains a koala kindy, soft release and koala food tree plantation, all of which are to support FOK in its rehabilitation work for koalas in the Northern Rivers Region. We are also privileged to have wild koalas and a wide range of native flora and fauna growing on, or frequenting, our property. We also have remnant rainforest parcels which we've been working to protect and restore. These multiple qualities were acknowledged by the granting of a Biodiversity Conservation Agreement in perpetuity over 75% of our land earlier this year.

I have read, and agree with, the analysis of the *Local Land Services Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2020* by the **Environmental Defenders Office**, so I see little value in regurgitating their analysis. The most disappointing thing for my husband and me personally is that this Bill, the related *Koala SEPP Amendments* and the final *Koala Habitat Protection Guideline* will, if approved, simply accelerate the pace of extinction of koalas – as well as the multitude of wildlife that share their habitat. The removal of habitat is the underlying cause of all our native wildlife's current parlous situation, and whilst the koala is listed as vulnerable in NSW, post 2019/2020 this should be lifted to endangered if not critically endangered. Even then, unless their remaining habitat is protected, for koalas it would be a case of death by a million cuts and extinction would likely happen by 2030 if the scientists' predictions are accurate.

The failure in these documents to acknowledge the impact of climate change on our flora and fauna with the two-year drought and bushfires we experienced around Australia in 2019/2020 – and are starting to occur again in WA – is almost incredible. It seems that politics and business interests carry more weight than the future of all animal species. As a personal example of the potential future if this Bill is approved, in December my husband and I went on a road trip to south east Queensland and western NSW as we wanted to get away and put a bit of money into some local economies. The drive from Goondiwindi to Moree was depressing, as for much of that distance there was nothing to see but huge wheatfields as far as the eye can see with hardly a tree in sight. During our time in Moree, with 38 degree temperatures, we were chatting to an Aboriginal artist and commented on the heat. His gentle response was 'well if you cut down the trees, which attract rain, then that's what you can expect'. In this context, it's disappointing that our governments are recommending a Bill that would make the current situation worse

I hope that your Committee can achieve the changes to this Bill that might give koalas and all our wildlife a better outcome.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Roslyn Irwin**

5 February 2021