

**Submission
No 68**

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

Name: Ms Victoria Quast

Date Received: 3 March 2021

The NSW Government Upper House

Submission: Koala SEPP Enquiry

The Koala SEPP is a vital piece of legislation that requires broad, open minded and intelligent oversight.

As a landholder in rural NSW, and farm land in an area renowned for koalas, I am keenly aware that planning instruments like the Koala SEPP are designed for urban and peri urban areas. As such, they tend to not consider how agricultural land and agi-business is conducted in koala habitation areas. Unfounded presumptions and cliches monopolise media interviews and reports and spread to become the common mantra, regardless of factual basis.

As private landholders, my family prudently manages our land and in doing so actually helps to protect koalas from fire and pests. I believe that the SEPP, as it stands, will stop the ability of landowners to manage their land and will place koalas in a more vulnerable position.

Again, as an instrument designed for urban and peri urban areas, the SEPP can turn off the land management code, causing significant interruption to farming businesses like ours and could prevent activities such as thinning which protects koalas. No assessment has yet been conducted to understand the extent of this damage to the rural environment, flora, fauna, financial and mental stresses, and to agriculture.

The idiocy of this SEPP is that it is relying on the theoretical location of tree species to define habitat of koalas. To follow this nonsense can quarantine land from agriculture where koalas have not been for decades. It is unreasonable and untenable to bring in a regulation for land without knowing which land it will affect, and to what extent.

There are already existing regulations through the governments' reforms to the LLS Act and with the Biodiversity Conservation Act in 2016. These regulations provide protection for koalas, along with the fact that farmers are strong environmentalists who care deeply for their land and the native creatures that inhabit it with them. Farmers have proven that strong environmental outcomes rely on active participation by landowners and I cannot begin to imagine how this could improve through interference and prohibition by Government.

Can I ask that the knowledge and experience of rural landowners be used, and complimented by incentive and education, across all demographics, not by autocratically locking up productive land.

Thank you for accepting my submission, and I look forward to realistic decisions going forward that will benefit and respect all stakeholders.