

**Submission
No 118**

**INQUIRY INTO LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND
FUTURE OF THE TIMBER AND FOREST PRODUCTS
INDUSTRY**

Organisation: Team Koala Inc.

Date Received: 27 May 2021

Team Koala Inc is a community volunteer organisation based on the Tweed Coast in Northern NSW. Since its inception in 2009 Team Koala has been an advocate for the koalas on the Tweed Coast and has engaged in campaigns to raise awareness of the endangered status of the Tweed Coast koalas. Team Koala also engages with the public through market stalls and education programs at local primary schools and community organisations.

While Team Koala is primarily engaged with the issue of protection of Tweed Coast koalas, Team Koala has an abiding interest in the survival of koalas throughout NSW. On the Tweed Coast habitat destruction is one of the primary causes of koala population decline. As further hardwood harvesting will contribute to further habitat loss, Team Koala submits that the continuing logging of native forests is totally counterproductive for the survival of the koala as a viable species in NSW.

An EPA review released in September 2020 found: “Fauna populations surviving in fire refuges in state forests are at risk of elimination by timber harvesting under the normal CIFOA which could prevent recovery, and cause catastrophic population decline in species such as the Koala, Greater Glider and Yellow-bellied Glider.”

1.8 million hectares of habitat and feed trees were destroyed during the fires. The forest which remains must be protected.

The patches of unburnt or lightly burnt forests that are threatened by logging are critical, often tiny, refuges for wildlife. Any logging of these remnants places undue pressure on species survival especially koalas.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed amended rules for logging to provide additional protections immediately following the fires, but Forestry Corporation NSW has abandoned these additional protections and returned to logging under the previous rules (CIFOAs). This will spell disaster for our forests and wildlife.

Team Koala believes that forestry must be a plantation based industry as this will ensure continuing employment in the timber industry whilst protecting our native forests, the home of Australia’s amazing fauna and flora and especially the koala.