

KOALAS IN DIRE STRAITS



AFA is calling on all our supporters as we face a real emergency. Koalas in NSW and Queensland are facing extinction and there's an urgent need for funds to fight the NSW, Queensland and Federal governments whose policies are driving these gentle creatures to oblivion.

Let's start with Queensland. 21,000 mature koala trees were cleared for the Moreton Bay Rail Link project.

That's more than 62 hectares of koala habitat. The Rail project goes from Petrie to Kippa Ring, through one of the most significant koala habitats in south-east Queensland.

281 koalas have died as a result. That's right. 281 koalas.

The death rate makes the LNP and Labor state governments the biggest killers of Koalas in the highly sensitive Koala Coast in the past three years.

Professor Daryl Jones from Griffith University said koalas were attacked by dogs when they travelled disoriented on the ground trying to find their homes in their original habitat.

This is the project's own koala data which shows:-

- 281 koalas have died.
- 167 koalas have been found dead during the monitoring period.
- 38 koalas have disappeared.
- 126 have been killed by wild dogs.
- 82 died from illness.
- 19 killed by carpet pythons.

Only 28 koalas were relocated from the project. Of these 28 koalas, nine have died; five due to wild dog attacks; three to disease; and one unknown.

According to one Queensland koala expert, koala population densities to Brisbane's north have fallen by 54 per cent over nearly two decades.

THIS IS BLOODY MURDER! STATE GOVERNMENT MURDER

These gentle animals have no defence. Koalas know their homes, they will walk on the ground for miles looking for where their home used to be. This terrible journey of loss makes them highly vulnerable to dog attacks, stress and subsequent death.

Let's not forget that its not only governments who are inflicting this dreadful holocaust on koalas but people who refuse to keep dogs in enclosed yards; people who let their dogs roam at will; people who turn their dogs loose because they can't be bothered keeping them.

In addition to this catastrophic loss, the Queensland government is allowing wholesale clearing of more koala habitat. At the same time setting up totally useless enquiries stacked with so called koala experts who are continuing to ignore the disaster unfolding.

Translocating koalas is not an option. Cubs learn the diet of eucalypts from their mothers at birth.

There's a limited number of eucalypt species in the home range which are the right food trees.



Although translocation has operated with reasonable success in Victoria, it is an option that requires similar habitat, great care in identifying the right species and in NSW and Queensland, has limited success.

A Federal Government website estimates that between 1990 and 2010, Queensland koala population declined by 43 %. As its now 2016, this figure is much higher, way beyond any acceptable limit.

EUTHANIZING KOALAS

Koalas in Queensland are also being euthanized at zoo hospitals at an alarming rate with anecdotal evidence that in many places up to and over 90% of koalas are put down.

This is the new policy of the Queensland government to address chlamydia. Apparently, the plan is to euthanize up to 40% of koalas, which given the above statistics of decline, should see a complete wipe out.

Some vets have apparently convinced the Palaszczuk government that the best way to

get rid of chlamydia in the koala population is to eradicate all animals showing signs of the disease.

Given that koalas are capable of recovering from chlamydia and that there are at least four known treatments which allow koalas to recover, the euthanizing of koalas is completely INSANE.

NSW - ANOTHER HORROR STORY

AFA has been deeply involved in putting our best efforts towards finding a legal challenge to prevent the NSW and Federal Governments from destroying the last remaining healthy colony of koalas and their habitat on the Far North Coast at Ballina.



The Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade will see the highway routed right through the Ballina Koala habitat. In January, the bulldozers will start pushing down mature koala feed trees. At a time when koalas are nursing their cubs they will be forced from their homes and driven out of their home ranges.

In the world first, the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) will ringbark and collar mature koala feed trees so that if the bulldozers don't kill the animals, then they will die of starvation or attacks by wild dogs. It will be impossible for the koalas to access their trees as ring barking defoliates the tree within six weeks and collaring prevents them climbing to safety and food.

This is obscene. AFA has gone back and forth to NSW Parliament

lobbying politicians to stop this juggernaut. There is an alternative route available which would not destroy koala habitat but the powers that be have dismissed the alternative as "too expensive".

No government has placed a value on koalas. The last survey attempting to put a value on koalas was done in 1999 and at that time, koala tourism was valued at \$1 billion. It is quite incredible to realise that no major political party places ANY value at all on Australia's unique wildlife.

In Byron Shire which is rapidly being over-run with tourists and mega festivals, the poor koalas are struggling to survive. 20 koalas have been found dead on the Bluesfest site. Koalas resident close to the Splendour in the Grass and Falls Festival sites have

disappeared and numbers continue to diminish.

No wonder. The noise, lights, traffic and disturbance for these nocturnal animals must be a nightmare.

The Pacific Highway Upgrade has been approved by the NSW government as a State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) which ensures that there can be no legal challenge. All environmental impact statements are done by contractors commissioned by the RMS and it really doesn't matter how inadequate these reports are as no one can challenge them under NSW legislation.

The State Environment Planning Policy – (SEPP) for koalas is ignored under the SSI designation.

The NSW Koala Recovery Plan dated 2008 has no updated version.

After the Commonwealth listing in 2012, a National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy was developed. After 2014, a Koala Recovery Plan under the EPBC Act was to commence.

The Koala Recovery Plan – There isn't one.

The Upgrade at Ballina will result in a loss of 948 hectares of native vegetation including 337 hectares of threatened ecological communities as well as :-

3 Endangered species and two vulnerable species under the EPBC Act.

6 endangered species, one endangered population and 35 vulnerable species listed under the Threatened Species Act (NSW)

10 EPBC Act listed migratory species.

IMPACTS OF ROADS ON KOALAS

- 1 **Mortality from road construction activities.** 
- 2 **Loss and alteration of the physical environment** 
- 3 **Alteration of the chemical environment.** 
- 4 **Barrier effects to dispersal and gene flow.** 
- 5 **Modification of animal behaviour.** 
- 6 **Spread of exotic species (including weeds and predators).** 
- 7 **Increased use of habitat areas by humans.** 

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KOALA POPULATION IN DECLINE

The most current Commonwealth government database indicates a decline of 33% in the total population of the listed Koala across its NSW range over 1990-2010.



However as this estimate is six years old, evidence of an even more critical decline can be shown in the disappearing sub-populations and extinctions since 2010.

Given the lack of any remotely current state survey in NSW, the best indications of the decline are demonstrated in the following areas regarded as significant populations. South Coast – major decline, Pittwater – extinction, Iluka, - extinct, Campbelltown – major decline, Port Stephens – major decline, Coffs Harbour – major decline, Bonville – major decline, Bellingen, Port Macquarie, Lismore, Byron – all in major decline.

The North Coast is the last stronghold of koalas in NSW.

Habitat loss and fragmentation in NSW, due to land clearing and urban development, has already resulted in koalas disappearing from 75% of their former range. Most of the remaining high quality koala habitat lies in State Forests and on private land where clearing of native vegetation and logging is leading to the removal of vital food and habitat trees.

If nothing is done to protect and reconnect koala habitat, population declines will continue unabated and extinction is sadly inevitable.

According to the North East Forest Alliance, in February 2018, the NSW government will change the rules to allow logging in Koala High Use Areas.

HAMILTON ISLAND MADNESS

If you think the information about koalas isn't bad enough, AFA has just learned about the appalling deliberate government sanctioned MURDER of wildlife on Hamilton Island. This report comes from the ABC.



Hundreds of animals are being killed at Hamilton Island to protect property and human health on the resort destination in Queensland's Whitsundays.

The ABC has learned wallabies, possums and native birds are being culled on Hamilton, renowned as one of Australia's premier island tourism destinations.

The resort island's managers have Queensland Government permission to kill an unrestricted number of agile wallabies, which were introduced to Hamilton in the 1970s.

Between November 2014 and May 2016, 393 agile wallabies were shot dead.

Nearly 600 brushtail possums were eradicated in the same time period, but Queensland's Environment Department allows up to 5,000 to be killed

over three years.

It is unclear what percentage of each species is being culled on the island, raising questions about whether the process is sustainable. An Environment Department spokeswoman said they did not have data on animal populations on Hamilton Island.

Three damage-mitigation permits are in place on the island "to prevent damage or loss of property and to protect the health and wellbeing of staff, guests and other visitors," she said. 35 sulphur crested cockatoos have been killed in the past 18 months, along with 36 pied currawongs and a kookaburra.

In a statement, management said sulphur-crested cockatoos and possums could harass guests — removing food off plates and tables at outdoor eating areas. It said there were also hygiene and disease concerns with the animals.



**PLEASE
SAVE THE
KOALAS**



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BAIRD GOVERNMENT SHOCK LEGISLATION

Baird Government's Draft Biodiversity Conservation Bill and Local Land Services Amendment Bill is due to go to a vote in Parliament in November.

The legislation will, if passed, repeal the Threatened Species Conservation Act, the Native Vegetation Act, Nature Conservation Trust Act, sections of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

In an Analysis of potential Vegetation clearing under the proposed Land Services Act, prepared by Ecological Australia, over 2.2 million hectares of woody vegetation which has been identified as either being

known or likely koala habitat could potentially be cleared under the equity code of the new land management framework. This equates to about 13% of the mapped woody vegetation across the State.

The Analysis indicates 313,948 known koala habitat is found on the North Coast.

Under the Biodiversity Bill, land clearing will be allowed on the basis of self-assessment. Offsets can be compensated with dollars.



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CO-ORDINATOR'S PLEA

I'm heartbroken witnessing the deliberate destruction of koalas and their habitat. So is the Committee of AFA and every person we speak to about the holocaust which is being visited on these defenceless animals.

Australia has a dreadful koala history. In the 1890's and early 1900s millions of Koalas were killed for their pelts. Large numbers died of epidemic disease as a result of extensive habitat clearing, severe drought, fragmentation. Many scientists believe the koalas have never recovered from these large losses.

Mainstream media ignores the plight of Koalas. Recently I met with the Environment Editor of the Sydney Morning Herald presenting him with a well researched brief on the shocking statistics in NSW.

The visit resulted in not one word of the interview being published. News Ltd is so anti the environment it's not even worth bothering to try and get an article out.

Over the years, I've been privileged to spend time with koalas and their naughty, delightful cubs in wildlife parks and koala hospitals. I've witnessed the dedication of so many people trying their best to help the animals. Australians love koalas. Now its time for us to transform this

love into action and to do this we need funds. AFA rarely makes urgent requests for funds but this truly is a most desperate and urgent situation. We have engaged lawyers, scientists and politicians to help.

AFA is in the process of creating a major coalition of opposition to the destruction. If our lawyers can identify a legal challenge we will proceed in Court to attempt to stop the Highway Upgrade.

If not, we will take our concerns over the looming koala extinction to the new Federal Minister for the Environment and raise hell in a public campaign on social media. AFA will also contact our overseas colleagues.

But we're asking you to dig deep as this is a fight for the survival of Australia's unique and irreplaceable Koala.

In 2016, the deliberate extermination of koalas is a crime against Nature. We must NOT let it happen.

Sue Arnold & Friends.

VICTORIA KOALA SCANDAL

If you think Victorian koalas are doing fine, we recently learned that almost 700 koalas were culled in the Cape Otway area of western Victoria because of "overpopulation issues", according to the state's Environment Minister.

The secret cull was done under the previous Liberal

government in 2013 and 2014 near the Great Ocean Road.

The koalas were captured and sedated before being put down by wildlife officials.

According to the Victorian government, the koalas were over-crowding their habitat. We surely are in the midst of Dark Ages for wildlife.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

AFA rarely asks for funds but the koala crisis is one of those moments.

We have a massive amount of research which must be undertaken to establish the status of koalas in Australia. Something similar to the scientific submission we prepared so that the koalas could be listed under the US Endangered Species Act.'

We need funds to get legal opinions. We need funds to fly

to Sydney and Canberra to lobby politicians. We need funds to start a major social media campaign.

Please help the koalas. International scientists are predicting that two thirds of the world's wildlife will have gone extinct by 2020.

Don't let the koala be added to the list.

Please Give Generously

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