



TIME FOR SOME POSITIVE INPUT

OUR CO-ORDINATOR HAS A MAJOR INTERVIEW WITH GRAHAM RICHARDSON (RICH) ON SKY NEWS

When Graham Richardson was the Labor Minister for the Environment, he was, without doubt one of the best environmental Ministers this country has seen. A few weeks ago, our Co-ordinator, Sue Arnold wrote to Graham asking if he would consider an interview on the appalling situation facing koalas.

In a very short time, Richo responded positively. And on May 30, he interviewed Sue for almost 15 minutes giving a national audience an insight into the absolute failure of the NSW, Queensland and Federal governments to protect koalas and their habitat. Even better, Graham has undertaken to interview the relevant Ministers and give Sue another opportunity to respond to their fallacious claims.

This is a huge breakthrough. Sue was able to demonstrate that the looming extinction of koalas is politically driven; that there's an urgent need for an independent inquiry into the state and federal government policies of extinction

and immediate protection of remaining koala habitat in NSW and Queensland.

She spoke at length on the suffering of koalas who lose their home range, of the stress caused by starvation, dehydration and loss of shelter which causes diseases like chlamydia.

She was also able to comment on the horrific live sheep and cattle trade. AFA believes the only solution to the dreadful cruelty inflicted on wildlife and animals subjected to the live export trade is to force States to include these animals in Prevention of Cruelty to Animals legislation. In effect, there would be no live export trade because the exporters would be imprisoned and so too



would those who take part in the trade.

Wildlife should be covered by anti cruelty legislation. Deprived of shelter, food, water and

vulnerable to predation by dogs and foxes, plus vehicles as they often end up on roads, wildlife needs the same legal protections as domestic animals.

AFA IS HARD AT WORK

Many of you may be wondering what AFA is actually doing in our campaign to ensure Koalas survive in NSW and Queensland. It's time those of you who so wonderfully support the charity know how your donations are spent! Here's a short list of some of the charity's efforts.

→ AFA has had extensive Questions on Notice asked in the NSW Parliament.

→ AFA has researched and finalised a status review of every koala population in NSW with population estimates, threats and extent of disease.

→ AFA will provide this review to all koala groups and relevant politicians.

→ AFA has almost completed a national list of all koala organisations with contact details. Amazingly, there's never been a complete list put together so this list

will enable every organisation to be contacted and to be in contact with each other.

→ AFA will provide the list to all interested koala organisations.

→ Sue writes regular articles on Koalas for Independent Australia with a good readership.

→ AFA has met with one of Australia's most experienced QC who has indicated his willingness to help in a legal challenge.

→ AFA is working with Environmental Defenders Office lawyers on the possibility of a lawsuit which, if it gets off the

ground, will set a precedent that is vital to future efforts to protect koalas.

→ AFA has met with Federal and State members of Parliament lobbying on the Koala.

→ AFA has emailed many agents of movie stars and professional sports people.

→ AFA is seeking to have a Koala Summit in NSW before the state election. The last Summit was organised by our Co-ordinator in 1998, when she was Secretary of the Sun Herald Koala Fund.

→ AFA meets regularly with scientists and veterinarians experienced in koala disease.

→ AFA has monitored the Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade for nearly 18 months with regular visits to the site, videoing the damage and detailing breaches of conditions of consent to the EDO lawyers.

→ AFA has a very successful blog on FaceBook – Koala Crisis – which



has attracted more than 400,000 hits since December. The regular blog ensures that current information is available to a huge audience in the hope of inspiring action.

→ AFA has contacted every major media organisation in Australia, every US zoo holding koalas and US environmental organisations who specialise in wildlife seeking help for the koala.

NSW AND QUEENSLAND RELEASE KOALA STRATEGIES.

There is no habitat protection included in either the NSW or Queensland governments' strategies.

It's becoming increasingly clear that the long term vision of these governments is to consider having a few koala hospitals and koalas in zoos is sufficient. Wild koalas can just quietly die as they're in the way of "progress".

Promises by the NSW government to protect areas are hollow. All koala researchers and scientists know where the most critical habitat areas are and none of these areas have been protected.

It's interesting to see that the NSW Koala "Expert" Panel does not include a single koala ecologist, no NGOs, no community organisations. The three scientists have expertise in chemistry and genetics. Hardly the specialities which are likely to have in depth knowledge of koalas.

Recommendations which were made by the NSW Chief Scientist for a Whole of Government strategy which would have ensured co operation between departments has been ignored. Public submissions to her strategy which should have been published have been locked up in government closets and will now only be accessible by Freedom of Information requests.

At the same time, the native forests on the Far North Coast which are the last stronghold of koalas in NSW remain the target of Forestry and the government. Recommendations by a Queensland koala committee have been largely ignored in the official Queensland Plan.



A starving Koala



**PLEASE
HELP SAVE THE
KOALAS**

AND FINALLY KEEP FINGERS CROSSED

Without going into detail, it does look like finally there is a lawsuit which could be mounted by EDO lawyers in NSW.

We're waiting on advice from Special Counsel but if this lawsuit does go ahead and is won in court, it will provide a NATIONAL PRECEDENT for all wildlife threatened by these irresponsible governments.

So please, dig deep. AFA is working hard and we need funds urgently to continue the battle.

**For the Animals
Sue Arnold & Friends**



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GENEROUSLY**

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