



# Australians for Animals

PROTECT • NURTURE • RESTORE

Reg. Charity No. CFN12644

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FEBRUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER



## KOALAS IN DIRE STRAITS DESPERATE TIMES FOR ALL WILDLIFE

*Make no mistake. Koalas are on the home stretch to extinction, the appalling legacy of governments who don't give a damn for this gentle precious uniquely Australian icon.*

Every state where koalas are found is dedicated to ensuring no koalas survive. There's no urgent upgrading of their status in NSW and Queensland to endangered. The NSW government rejects all calls for a moratorium on logging in forests that have not been burned. These forests are the only refuges remaining for koalas and forest dependent species.

In Queensland, the Palacszuk government is once again trying to foist a useless koala strategy on the public with the carrot being a promise to protect thousands of hectares of land. What the Premier doesn't say is that the government is making plans for another 2.5 million people in Southeast Queensland, with an estimated 30,000 residences being built annually. No koalas will survive this onslaught.

In NSW, southwest Sydney koalas are almost certainly the only healthy expanding koala population left in the state. But their future is grim as Lend Lease and Walker Corporation

prepare to construct massive urban projects which will destroy remaining habitat.

Road upgrades to accommodate the huge urban sprawl will see the bulldozing of critically important feed trees. Southwest Sydney koalas have survived the fires but right now, their trees are covered in ash, they're stressed and thin as obtaining healthy nutrient rich leaves is increasingly difficult.

The Berejiklian government refuses to protect these koalas. The government is deaf to the community's outrage. This is the new normal. Politicians simply ignore emails, phone calls, requests for meetings.

In South Australia, thousands and thousands of koalas have died in the fires. On Kangaroo Island, 23,000 koalas were living in the blue gum plantations which have burned to the ground. Blue gum plantations are highly flammable, koalas had no chance.



In Victoria, the massacre of koalas near Portland after a landowner cleared remaining blue gum plantations on his property has horrified the world. Dead, dying, dreadfully injured koalas left in huge piles of log debris. Some with joeys. Terrified, traumatised koalas.

Blue gum plantations in Victoria have been the scene of dreadful koala cruelty with potentially thousands of

koalas dying as the bulldozers ripped through the trees. In spite of AFA submitting a Freedom of Information request at the beginning of 2019 to the relevant Department in Melbourne, seeking the numbers killed in plantation harvesting, plus a population estimate for koalas in Victoria, one year later the government is still with-holding the information.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER

*At the Federal level, the PM has ignored the wildlife holocaust. He's ignored the scientific community estimates that over 1 billion animals have perished in the fires.*

In December, federal Minister for the Environment, Sussan Ley, announced that over 8,000 koalas had died on the mid north coast as a result of the intense bushfires. That's was a huge wipe out of the state's koala population.

This death toll only represented the mid north coast. AFA is aware that there have been a far greater death toll in NSW for koalas which has not been acknowledged.

Nevertheless, the Minister came out in the media announcing she had set up an expert panel to advise on wildlife recovery.

AFA called Sussan Ley's senior advisor to find out what scientists had been

invited to form the Minister's "expert panel".

Not ONE koala expert scientist is on the panel. Nor is there likely to be any emergency upgrading to endangered status for koalas in any areas where koalas have survived. There are no provisions for emergency listing under the EPBC Act.

The Department of Environment has now been swallowed up in the Morrison re-arrangement of the government. What remains of this department is now part of Agriculture, Water & the Environment, currently under a National Party Minister. The Deputy Leader—at the time of writing.

Any environmental issues should never be left to the National Party—its members have a dreadful record of neglect and downright insanity. Look no further than Barnaby Joyce. At the same time, the government has refused to stop the commercial slaughter of kangaroos and hunters have no problem shooting the poor suffering animals.

According to the carers at Tenterfield, hundreds are being shot. One carer who looks after kangaroos exclusively, said the animals are free to leave her property, but they don't. Who can blame them.

In over 30 years of operating, AFA has never witnessed anything like the political refusal to focus on the catastrophic losses. We have received so many calls and emails from people who are beside themselves with grief, all saying the same thing.

*"This is not the Australia I grew up in. What's happening to my country?"*



### PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

You can donate to Australians for Animals through GiveNow's secure online server or please send your donations to:

AUSTRALIANS FOR ANIMALS  
PO BOX 414 BRUNSWICK HEADS 2483



Reg. Charity No. 0170344

[www.givenow.com.au/koalacrisis](http://www.givenow.com.au/koalacrisis)

# DROUGHT AND BUSHFIRES HELL REALMS

**AFA has spent the last three months entirely focused and involved in the dreadful impacts of the bushfire inferno and the ongoing drought.**

Way before the fires began, the drought was causing major starvation and thirst for koalas and any leaf dependent animal. Carers reported thin koalas, dehydrated and in poor condition. Definitely not in any shape to cope with the traumas that lay ahead.

Many of them had abandoned their joeys. With barely enough food to survive themselves, raising a joey became impossible. Heat waves continued with no rain in sight bringing relief.

We all know what happened in November, December, January, and now February. Fires have burned out over 7.7 million hectares. Scientists estimate more than 1 billion animals (

wildlife) have perished. Fires told AFA that in some areas, the fires were so intense they burned through two metres of earth, cremating microorganisms, leaving nothing.

AFA has done everything possible to bring relief to our suffering wildlife. We called shelters who were outside the coastal strip but dealing with huge numbers of animals including koalas, gliders, possums, echidnas, kangaroos, wallaroos, bats, birds and bettong.

The charity adopted the New England Wildlife Shelter at Tenterfield, undertaking to ensure long term supplies of feed, medical needs, petrol for trips to wildlife hospitals and enclosures. AFA is shocked by the



absolute failure of governments to arrange any food drops for kangaroos and wallabies ( save for the endangered rock wallaby).

The NSW government refused to consider a most reasonable and sensible suggestion that a moratorium on logging in remaining unburnt forests be declared until such time as the extent of damage can

be estimated. Even as the fires were consuming National Parks and forests, logging continued.

Koalas and other forest dependent animals can't be provided with supportive feed. Gliders need hollows in trees, leaf dependent species can only survive on healthy fresh leaves. This is why its critically urgent to save the forests.

## BUSHFIRE SCAMS ABOUND

**AFA is pretty shocked by the amount of scams on social media raising money for supposed bushfire causes which turn out to be nothing more than scams.**

The charity has constantly advised people on social media to check whether they're donating to a genuine charity and to find out how much will be spent on administration.

AFA has also urged the major conservation groups to adopt shelters instead of adopting a koala. Given the extent of the crises facing our wildlife, AFA is deeply disappointed in the response by major organisations. Press conferences and full page ads in mainstream newspapers are desperately needed to hold the state and federal governments' to account over their ongoing failure to do anything significant to ensure wildlife survive.

These groups have raised millions and millions of dollars. Enough to buy habitat, desperately needed if our



wildlife is to have any future.

The charity is also aware that there are a number of shelter organisations that should never be allowed to hold koalas but once again, the authorities are turning a blind eye.

## AFA ASSISTS CARERS

**Adopting a wildlife shelter is a better option to help surviving wildlife.**

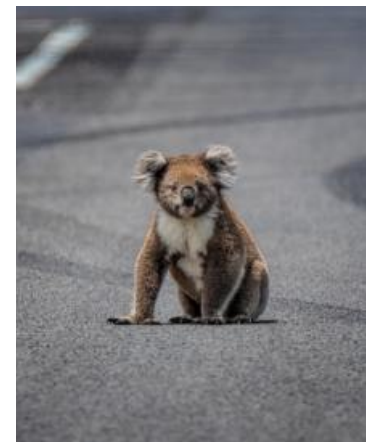
AFA also helped carers in Adelaide Hills, Sydney, the Blue Mountains, and Brisbane. We have also advised our US colleagues to donate their funds to vets who are working voluntarily in South Australia and Victoria. Unfortunately, there seems no volunteer vet organisation in either NSW or Queensland.

More recently, we've partially adopted the Possumwood Wildlife at Bungendore, run by two very dedicated professionals who have cared for over 6,000 animals in the last 20 years.

Our Koalacrisis page on Facebook has played a vital role in reporting on the political shenanigans as these outrageous state and federal governments continue to refuse to help remaining wildlife to survive. The social media page has thousands and thousands of hits and is now a reliable source of information which mainstream media continues to ignore.

AFA asked National Parks & Wildlife Service a series of questions as the charity attempted to find out if any wildlife were being provided with food drops by the government. The responses, which took many phone calls, indicate that there's very little being done in the way of food drops. Wildlife is being left to starve to death.

Ordinary Australians are taking matters into their own hands. Many people are gathering up pellets, hay bales, and feed for the starving



animals in spite of threats by governments. AFA is aware that privately funded helicopter food drops have been denied access to air space.

Recent reports by [Yahoo News Australia indicate a New Zealand vet who flew to Australia to help treat wildlife was prevented from entering fire affected areas in Victoria.](#)

According to the report, veterinarian Dr Rebecca Penman is just "one of a growing list of wildlife carers who have expressed frustration, alleging that the Victorian government has blocked their access to burnt out forests".

"They're saying we don't need any volunteers, we don't need anyone helping. But there's plenty of wildlife out there, the government is just pushing back."



**PLEASE  
HELP  
SAVE  
THE  
KOALAS**

[www.givenow.com.au/koalacrisis](http://www.givenow.com.au/koalacrisis)

# ARE THERE SOLUTIONS?

**AFA organised a meeting early last year with a leading Queensland barrister together with several other lawyers to see if there was any way the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act could be used to bring charges of cruelty against governments over the treatment of wildlife.**

Given that it's a crime to leave a domestic animal without food, shelter, water and exercise, the same rights should be attributable to wildlife. Our wildlife is subjected to deliberate cruelty as a direct result of government policies of environmental insanity.

An academic lawyer in WA had made contact, in his opinion, the Act might be an option. However, after a lot of research, the lawyers came to conclusion there was no way to use this Act in either state.

But! According to several press reports after the terrible koala massacre at Cape Bridgewater, the Victorian Minister for the Environment has this to say:

*"D'Ambrosio described the incident as "abysmal", saying: "We will do everything possible to bring the people responsible for this to account and will throw every penalty available to us at them."*

She said the government would consider breaches of both the [Wildlife Act](#) and the [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act](#)."

AFA has made contact with Environmental Justice lawyers in Melbourne to see if there's any charges laid by the government under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. We can only hope!

If charges are laid, then that creates a precedent to support our Olympic efforts to have wildlife included in ALL states' prevention of cruelty legislation. Changes to these Acts take an affirmative vote to added provisions in state parliaments. Hardly a difficult proposition!

However, AFA and everyone who cares for wildlife would want a provision in the Act changes which allowed for governments to be charged for acts of cruelty.



IMAGE: <https://nz.news.yahoo.com/over-40-koalas-presumed-dead-195756887.html>

## LEGAL HELP

**AFA continues to work tirelessly trying to get a legal challenge to stop the looming loss of southwest Sydney koalas.**



iStock: Sydney, Australia - July 19, 2019: Supreme Court of New South Wales

The charity spent many long hours working up a brief for an excellent barrister. But we were too late. The legal horse had bolted. Another organisation, a client of the Environmental Defenders Office, could have taken some appropriate legal action but failed to.

Unfortunately, the EDO will now only take on one client for an issue. AFA is currently in dialogue with the barrister as we seek ANY legal option to stop the ongoing merciless wipe out koalas and our irreplaceable wildlife.

Entire ecosystems have been destroyed. The extent of damage to Australia's environment is a global environmental emergency but none of the political parties or governments are willing to acknowledge the desperate need for a full environmental audit. Combined with a moratorium on ALL developments impacting remaining habitat.

We will continue to seek any avenue which provides protection for our beloved wildlife heritage.

# ADOPT



## A WILDLIFE SHELTER

**To adopt a shelter visit:**  
[www.givenow.com.au/koalacrisis](http://www.givenow.com.au/koalacrisis)

**LEAVE A COMMENT WITH YOUR DONATION WITH THE NAME OF THE SHELTER YOU'D LIKE TO ADOPT**

# QLD DRAFT KOALA STRATEGY

*Oh my. What a disaster. AFA has been invited by the government to round table meetings and prior to the closing date for submissions on the latest mountain of paper, the draft koala strategy, to a meeting in Brisbane.*

AFA spoke out at this meeting calling on the government to place a moratorium on all developments impacting koalas and their habitat until such time as the damage from bushfires and drought were assessed, No way. The government ploughs on with a precious koala colony and habitat in Toowoomba at the mercy of the Department of Defence (Canberra) along with more and more developments destined to wipe out

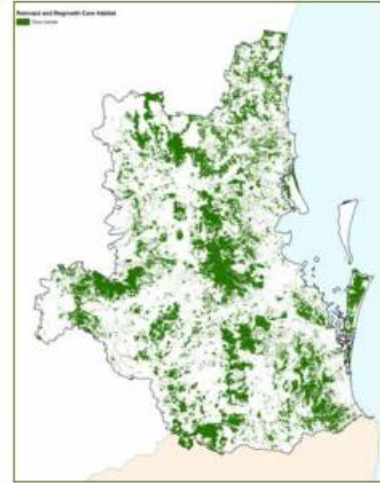
SEQ koalas.

Given the plan to increase the population of SEQ by 2.5 million, with an estimated 30,000 new residences annually, the draft Strategy makes a mockery of commonsense.

When the assembled audience at the meeting was asked : ' What do you consider is the main threat to koalas?', AFA responded – “ Politicians”. That's the reality.



**Pre-clearing (1960s)  
koala habitat extent**



**Remaining extent of remnant  
and high-value regrowth  
koala habitat**

SOURCE: Page 8 - Draft South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2019-2024

## SAVE THE KOALA CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES

AFA has put together a booklet for communities fighting to save koala habitat which is free on line.



The booklet is full of useful information including rescue guidelines, hospital contacts, media and political guidelines. The booklet is free of charge.

**GET YOURS HERE:** <http://bit.ly/koalarescue>



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[www.twitter.com/koalacrisis](http://www.twitter.com/koalacrisis)

## AUSTRALIA CLIMATE CHANGE



iStock: Sydney, NSW, Australia - November 20th 2019: Smoke over Sydney due to bush fires on edge of city.

***We are living in an ancient land, a land which international and national scientists have predicted over and over again would be highly vulnerable to major climate impacts.***

All scientific advice and concern has been ignored by governments. The land, rivers, forests, and wildlife are paying the price of colossal neglect.

The driver of this catastrophic neglect is a determination for growth at any cost. Both major parties (and the Greens also support major increases in immigration) are focused on a population of 50 million.

Blind Freddy knows that there's no possibility Australia can cope with 50 million. The evidence of water shortages alone should serve as a warning.

But there's money to be made by the few. And it's abundantly obvious that those in power have no concern for

wildlife. They're just "things" in the way of "progress".

AFA is using all its resources to battle for a future for wildlife. Options are limited as the Murdoch corporation owns most of the mainstream and regional media.

The Murdoch media is anti environment, anti wildlife and anti climate change impacts at a time when we need objective, sane, responsible discussion, strategy and policies which ensure survival of Mother Earth... on which we depend for all life.

***Please keep supporting our work!  
Sue Arnold & Friends.***