



Australians for Animals

PROTECT • NURTURE • RESTORE

Reg. Charity No. CFN12644

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DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



A PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS TO ALL

Australians for Animals Inc. would like to thank you all for your support this year. It's been a very taxing year with Covid 19 making our lives extremely difficult whilst watching the political behind the scenes ongoing environmental destruction.

The charity has spent the time focused entirely on legal research. Our aim has been to find a legal challenge to stop the industrial logging of our remaining native forests in NSW. It has been an enlightening and at the same time, a very sobering experience.

Almost every harvest plan (required before any logging can commence) which the Forestry Corporation has approved indicates the presence of koalas. As koalas share the ecosystem with gliders, they share the same fate. Loss of habitat, starvation, death.

These are unique and precious creatures. Harmless animals. Gentle animals. Defenceless animals.

Then there's roles they play in keeping the coastal ecosystem healthy so all the critters, human and non-human can survive and thrive. Ignored by governments.

The Glasgow climate conference signalled a big red danger zone for Planet Earth as a result of climate change impacts. Signals that our state and federal governments

continued to ignore. Instead, we're treated to a Prime Minister - whose government is run by slogans - telling us that technology will fix it. With no plan.

Some of you will have watched the 7.30 Report two-part series on what's happening in the Victorian forests. It was like witnessing a war zone. Dreadful, irreversible, mindlessly irresponsible devastation ensuring no wildlife could possibly survive.

Magnificent forests clear-felled. The destruction being wrought by the forestry industries, the massive urbanisations projects is at the cost of Australia's wildlife and environment.

This ancient land is mostly a dry desert, the coastline areas and coastal forests feeding the nation.

The forests are critical. They bring rain, provide shelter, are home to countless species of animals, birds, bats, insects, snakes, frogs. Sustainably managed, forests can provide timber for homes, for every need. But not for woodchips, not for the export markets.



PLEASE HELP SAVE THE KOALAS

www.givenow.com.au/koalacrisis

GREEN HYDROGEN NATIVE FOREST BIOMASS

Now, NSW forests are facing another major threat. Green hydrogen using forest biomass as feedstock. But there's nothing green about using forest biomass, which also includes native vegetation.

Both the new NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet and newly anointed treasurer and Minister for Environment Matt Kean announced in November that the under the provisions of their new hydrogen hub guidelines, the government would not fund any green hydrogen project which used native forest biomass.

But a guideline isn't law and there's nothing to stop hydrogen companies from seeking private funding by setting up public listing on the stock exchange, getting finance from international corporations and local financing.

Unfortunately, in 2017, the Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (DPIE) compiled a report on NSW north coast forest residues – a precursor to using the forest biomass for burning to generate electricity.

This report has never been updated since the fires and now several hydrogen projects are looking at these residue estimates as their source of feedstock. An important lawsuit in December will determine whether forest biomass is okay or permanently off the agenda.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFERS NO SOLUTIONS

The federal government has published a road map for green hydrogen which makes confusing

statements about forest biomass. On the one hand the report says that native forests should not be used but plantations and private land are okay.

Imagine what any forest looks like with all the ground cover scraped up, the old branches, wood bits, bark, all cleared by noisy machinery ripping into the forest carpet, taking away the refuges for insects, worms, tiny critters who till the earth.

AFA has been up to its eyeballs in forest issues. Our co-ordinator (former Fairfax investigative journalist) writes for Independent Australia and Michael West Media on environmental issues, focusing on the koala and the ongoing destruction of native forests.

At the same time, the charity has campaigned tirelessly with submissions, helping with funding David Bradbury's latest documentary on the mindless waste caused by wood chipping. A documentary which is unlikely to see the light of day on mainstream media.

AFA has exhaustively researched every single flora and fauna species listed in the governing documents and legislation which allow the Forestry Corporation to continue.

The green hydrogen issue is yet another nail in the forest coffin and requires even more extensive research to demonstrate using forest biomass and native vegetation is insanity.



SOME GOOD NEWS

Here's the good news. After no less than 8 lawyers including a number of Environmental Defenders Office solicitors, one barrister and three special counsel, work is now proceeding at the highest level to make a potential challenge a reality!

Any test case is a hard nut to crack. Few lawyers want to test the waters but finally, it seems AFA has struck pay dirt after almost two years of effort.

We're not breaking out the bubbly, and if we do decide on proceeding with an action, the only cause for

celebration will be the knowledge that something is actually happening that could ensure some of our koalas and wildlife survive.

AFA has said repeatedly that predictions which claim koalas "will be extinct by 2050" are deeply irresponsible. If the current rate of habitat destruction continues, (and nothing will change unless Australians vote for independent, environmentally aware candidates) we will see a catastrophic loss of koalas within this decade.

NSW GOVERNMENT FOCUSES ON 2 MILLION IMMIGRANTS OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS

This is really the last straw. As one economist said, the plan is "lazy, irresponsible and horribly misguided and needs to be shot down before significant damage is done." 2 million immigrants would require a city the size of Perth.

Our way of life is already severely compromised by huge immigration, with owning a house now out of reach for the majority of young people, not to mention many of us.

Two million immigrants will "revive the economy" according to NSW Premier Perrottet. Imagine the massive urbanisation projects

needed to accommodate this many. Schools, hospitals, infrastructure all needing timber.

AFA has in process a freedom of information request to establish which politician is behind the appalling plan.

It's almost certainly going to be

previous premiers Mike Baird and the dreaded Gladys Berejiklian.

Soon our universities will be bursting again with 130,000 overseas students at a time when Australian kids need to be able to get a tertiary education.

Educating our children is the best investment any country can make.



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KOALAS FACE TERRIBLE ODDS

Koalas simply cannot survive the massive and growing number of threats. Already koalas have gone extinct in some areas. Localised extinctions are how extinction of the species happens. Unless there's refuges or national parks where some survive and numbers can grow.

But there are no refuges or national parks. Matt Kean, NSW Minister for environment ignores all requests to create the Great Koala National Park on the mid north coast. An action which would ensure the survival of koalas in the state.

AFA is fed up with governments, fed up with politicians who specialise in double speak, and really cranky that there's no concerted effort on the part of major conservation groups to lobby furiously for the creation of the Park. Habitat loss is the number one reason koalas are slowly but steadily disappearing. Habitat loss is the primary cause of chlamydia as the stress from losing home ranges diminishes the immune system allowing bacteria and diseases to take over.

It's been a tough year, AFA has helped a number of small wildlife carer groups, several in Victoria. But trying to get receipts, acknowledgements, updates has proved an almost impossible task.

There's a frightening lack of cohesion and co-operation in the environmental movement.

In the Sydney Morning Herald recently, an article on one small koala named Ella was reported as having been taken into care eight times. She struggles to survive in southwest Sydney where massive urbanisation

will wipe out the last remaining healthy population in the state unless drastic action to protect these koalas by government.

Eight times into care?? Ella has been hit by a car, lost her joey, found injured, dehydrated or in areas where she was in danger.

According to the article, 20 wildlife groups have written to Kean requesting stronger laws to protect koalas, a national park in Sydney's west and greater protection of habitat at risk of logging.

Sounds good but it's a weak, weak effort. WIRES, the NSW Wildlife Council and Sydney Wildlife then commended the government for its \$193.3 million investment in koala rehabilitation in the budget.

Bottom line? "Koala rehabilitation"? Who is kidding who? There are only one-way koalas will survive, legal protection of habitat. And that's only going to happen if Sydney's west gets a massive national koala park together with the Great Koala National Park.

It's also going to be critical that refuge areas are identified and protected from climate impacts as koalas are being forced to move further inland.

As for strengthening laws or ensuring greater protection of habitat at risk of logging, this is just evidence that wildlife groups involved don't do their



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homework. Every piece of legislation in NSW capable of providing any slim protection for koalas has been repealed and replaced with laws that make any public interest challenges well-nigh impossible.

The Forestry Corporation is basically doing whatever it likes as the legislation which protects their activities prohibits any public citizen legal effort.

Surely their groups must know this?

Yet on and on it goes. A perfect example provided by Perrottet and Kean saying the government won't fund any green hydrogen project that uses native forest biomass.

What about plantations? Private forests? How are animals living in these forests protected if there's no barrier legal or otherwise to removing biomass? What about native forest compartments being turned into plantations?

How will the NSW government

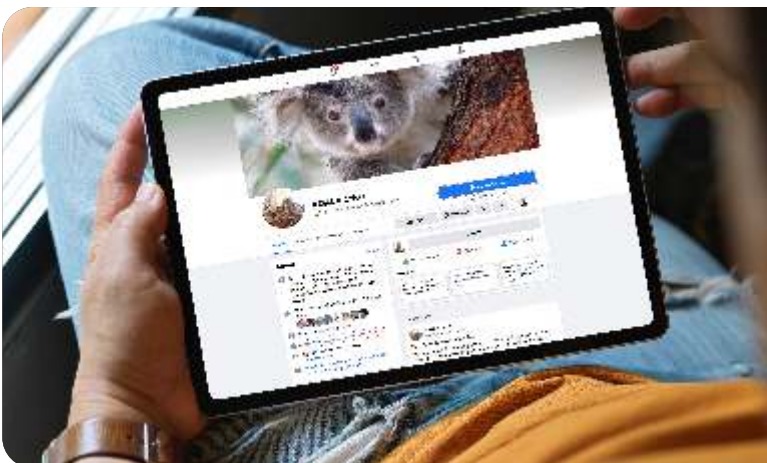
"double koala numbers by 2050"?

Social media is full of petitions, options to adopt koalas, never ending requests for donations, and nothing changes.

AFA runs Koala Crisis on Facebook, a well-read blog which keeps a firm finger on the political pulse. Koala Crisis rarely requests funds except in dire circumstance such as the bushfires. Or for a grassroots group in need of funds and donations are directed to the group's accounts, not AFA.

Making sure that your local wildlife group has sufficient funds is a priority. AFA has always recommended supporting local community first. That way you can see how funds are spent and help your community's wildlife heritage.

It's also important to help groups saving dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, and chooks! All our animals are having problems and are in need of help.



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Engaging with and sharing
our facebook page and posts
helps create awareness of
the KOALA CRISIS

www.facebook.com/koalacrisis

CHARLIE AND THE CATS

As we don't wish our supporters to suffer from AFA newsletter stress, it's time for some Charlie stories.



You'll remember that we lost our precious rescue dog Mitch last year. His back legs finally gave up and we had to euthanise our 15 year old dog angel. We spent months checking out dogs in shelters, council pounds and in local shelters with no success.

We did find a dog near Coffs Harbour. The carer swore he was a border collie and loved cats – an important consideration given that we have two Burmese cats who are now 14 years old. The dog didn't look like a border collie. And we thought it was curious that the carer insisted that we didn't look the dog in the eye. 48 hours later, we took the dog back as it turned out he was a pig dog, bordering on downright dangerous as he refused to do anything other than growl and snarl. The cats were terrified. So were we?

So, months later when the opportunity to get a four-month-old cavoodle puppy came up, we didn't

hesitate in spite of many friends saying – “you'll be having your work cut out with a puppy!” How right they were.

Charlie has dug up every bromeliad in the garden. He and Rainy Cat together conspired to dig a gigantic hole under a gate which allowed Rainy to escape .. frequently, before the hole was discovered.

But now Charlie has celebrated his first birthday. He and the cats love each other. The obstacle course we built for Charlie is now a favourite past time for one of the cats who imitates everything Charlie does.

It's been a big lesson as to why dog energy is an important component in having a happy life. Animals are wonderful companions; their unconditional love is a blessing. Charlie has made us laugh in the worst of times. His spirit and sense of humour has charmed everyone who meets him.

HOPE FOR THE NEW YEAR

AFA has had many blessings this year along with the huge workload. The charity has been helped in amazing ways from unexpected sources.

There are people out there in positions that can help and are willing to do what they can. It will take a lot of heavy lifting if things are going to change politically. Australia is rapidly mimicking the USA with deep divisions in the community over the pandemic, vaccination and climate action.

It's been extraordinary to watch the demonstrations against vaccination at a time when climate change threatens life on earth.

As those of you who have been such wonderful supporters over the years

well know, AFA doesn't mince words. We tell things how they are. We wish there were ready solutions but corruption and greed are forcing change all over the world.

The best we can do is to keep fighting for our wildlife and for those that cannot speak.

This is your gift to the animal kingdom. Thank you so much, AFA is the result of a great deal of love and support which the charity treasures.

**For the Animals,
Sue Arnold & Friends.**



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