



Australians for Animals

PROTECT • NURTURE • RESTORE

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MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER



THE FUTURE OF NSW NATIVE FORESTS IS ON THE LINE

On March 25, the voters of NSW will decide who will govern the state. Environmentally, it's the most critical election in the history of the state.

Under Perrottet and Berejiklian our native forests have been brought to the point of ecological collapse.

Koalas have been up-listed to endangered. The Greater Glider is up-listed to endangered. Yet in spite of this major national recognition, the Perrottet government has completely failed to address the species frail, vulnerable state. No changes have been made in harvest plan approvals or in the overall management plan to reflect the dire state of these species.

Instead, industrial logging is happening at a furious pace as the Forestry Corporation attempts to fill its wood supply contracts and do the most damage whilst the Coalition government remains in power.

Not once has Perrottet mentioned koalas or wildlife in his election propaganda. The serious state of the native forests has been completely off limits, not one word has been focused on the ongoing destruction.

Koala hubs are being destroyed.

Koalas are an umbrella species for coastal forest ecosystems. When koala habitat is bulldozed, a significant number of species are also wiped out. In some instances, entire ecosystems are obliterated.

On the north and south coast there are huge protests happening in forest compartments the Forestry Corporation is currently logging. Tree sits, sit-ins, protests by the community are all ignored by the mainstream and local media.

Given that most local media these days is owned by News Ltd., it's almost impossible to get any articles which deal with the ongoing collapse of forest dependent wildlife.

A vote for the Perrottet government is a vote for the looming extinction of koalas, gliders, the swift parrot and countless forest dependent species.

The Labor party has promised that the Great Koala National Park will finally be declared. If the ALP wins



the election and keeps its policy promise, the koala and many species will have a real opportunity to survive. We shall see.

But at least there's some recognition of the urgent and increasingly desperate need for a major national park. Perrottet and former

environment minister now Treasurer Matt Kean have done their best to ensure there are no parks declared for koalas.

Instead approving massive urbanisation projects in prime koala habitat, ensuring further mortality of a species struggling to survive.

AFA HAS ACTED

At the beginning of 2023, the charity began a major research project. The aim was to develop a brief scientific submission on the cascading impacts of the 2019-2020 bushfires on the forests currently being logged.

Although there has been research, the focus has been on single issues. There's been no attempt to put together an holistic picture of the sheer extent of damage spelling out the current and long term implications of the NSW government completely failing to take any action to address the appalling damage.

With the help of several scientists, a short brief of peer reviewed, published research excerpts was put together. The submission covered the catastrophic loss of biodiversity, flora, invertebrates, riparian zones, Alpine Ash eucalypt forests, freshwater aquatic species and the

damage to soil.

This is a summary of the cascading losses. The Department of Industry and Environment estimated that 42% of all state forests had been burnt.

The impacts included:

- a. Loss of ecological integrity
- b. Loss of ecosystem capacity and services
- c. Loss of biodiversity
- d. Loss of plant species and habitat
- e. Loss of invertebrates
- f. Loss of vertebrate species and habitat.



g. Loss of aquatic biodiversity

h. Loss and degradation of riparian zones

i. Catastrophic soil loss with erosion impacts.

The ecological carrying capacity of the forests was estimated to have been reduced by a third in the burnt areas which represented a 39% reduction in ecological carrying capacity since 2013.

1.9 million hectares of very high suitability Koala habitat was within

the fire grounds representing 22% of the best koala habitat in eastern NSW.

Almost 3 billion animals died or were impacted by the fires.

Suitable habitats for 69% of all plant species were burnt.

Soil erosion was equally catastrophic with massive impacts. Soil Science Australia research demonstrated that "a teaspoon of soil is estimated to contain several thousand species of micro-organisms."

Professor David Eldrige of the University of NSW Centre for Ecosystem Science said: Soils take a long time to recover after fire because formation rates are extremely slow. A typical rate for NSW is about one centimetre every thousand years."

Research by other scientists demonstrated that Mountain Ash and Alpine Ash forests, a favourite species for logging were close to collapse.

INCREDIBLE SUPPORT BY THE SCIENTISTS

Once the scientific submission was completed, the next step was to draft a letter to the CEO of the NSW Environment Protection Agency, requesting a comprehensive review of the forests under the control of the Forestry Corporation.

No review has been undertaken since 2014. These reviews are supposed to happen every five years.

AFA made contact with a significant number of scientists with the relevant expertise, both nationally and internationally. Thirty-one scientists signed on including some of the most recognised global experts.

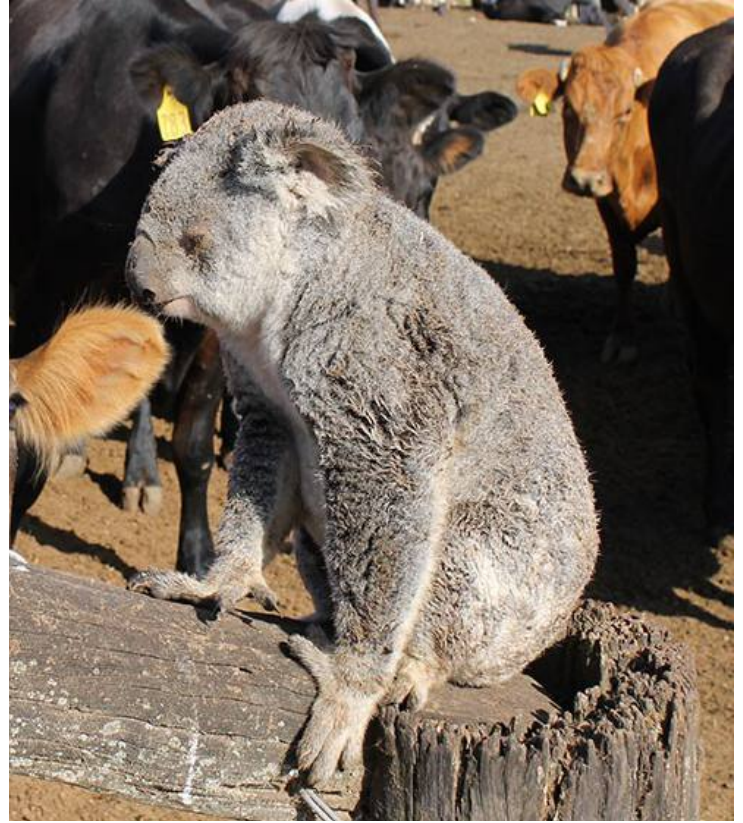
Scientists included US Professor Paul Ehrlich, regarded as one of the world's leading ecologists. Dr Peter Raven of the Missouri Botanical Garden in the USA signed on. His expertise on flora is globally recognised. Many of the scientists who signed on are Fellows of the Australian Academy of Science, a recognition of their expertise.

The submission and the sign-ons presented a devastating case for a comprehensive review.

EPA RESPONSE

AFA is happy to say that the submission and request has been well received by the EPA CEO. We have had further discussions and will have to wait and see who wins the NSW state election.

Given that the failure to conduct the five-year review was the responsibility of former deputy premier and national party leader John Barilaro together with former environment minister now treasurer, Matt Kean, the failure can be sheeted right home to the coalition government.



MAINSTREAM MEDIA CENSORSHIP

AFA sent out a press release to over 265 TV, radio and newspapers on the scientific submission with the excellent sign-ons calling for a comprehensive review.

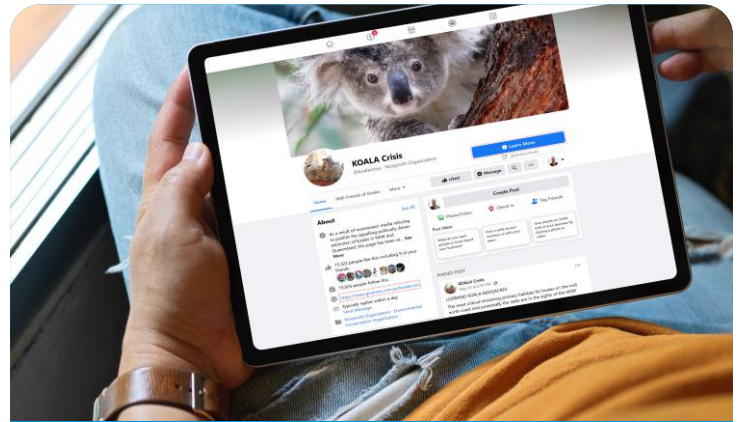
The ONLY media that responded was Michael West Media who published a great article. In spite of phone calls and emails to specific journalists on the Guardian, the Sydney Morning Herald, no one replied.

It is now impossible to call the News Desk of any major newspaper. This is

real censorship and a recipe for the delivery of propaganda on a grand scale.

AFA battles on. Thank you for all your incredible support. Please think carefully before you vote in NSW!

Sue Arnold & Friends.



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