

The Director,
Planning Frameworks,
NSW Department of Planning and Environment,
GPO Box 39,
Sydney 2001.



Dear Sir/Madam,

Koala Habitat Protection – SEPP 44

The review of this SEPP to better protect koala habitat is long overdue as koala numbers have declined by about a third over the 20 years of the current SEPP.

This population decline of koalas is an indication that koala habitat is not currently being protected under this SEPP. That point is emphasised by the listing of Koalas as vulnerable under both NSW and Commonwealth Acts.

It is noted that this release is headed **Intended Effect** but no details included of the intended changes to the current SEPP to effect the outcomes.

The scope of the SEPP 44 must be widened to achieve its aim by being applicable to all land management activities within the state with no exceptions. Effective koala habitat management should be consistent under all relevant legislation with provision for regular and on-going monitoring and auditing measures by appropriate agencies that are fully funded for field surveys.

The key to the survival of any species is protection of its habitat. Koalas are a forest species and the greatest threat to its survival is industrial-scale logging on both public and private lands. The recent changes to land-clearing legislation in this state is incompatible with SEPP 44's aim to better protect koala habitat. WWF has estimated that land-clearing could wipe out up to 2M ha of koala habitat.

Any genuine effort to reverse the serious decline in koala numbers must properly identify remaining habitats, fully protect those areas from further encroachment and ensure that measures are adequately enforced to ensure that this iconic species can survive and prosper into the future.

In conclusion this SEPP 44 should integrate the findings of the NSW Chief Scientist's Report as well as those of a completed NSW Koala Strategy to provide a comprehensive basis for protection and management of koala habitat into the future.

Yours faithfully,

Doug Blackwell

 Congarinni. 2447

