



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts**

C10/8468

Ms Bronte Somerset  
bjsomerset@gmail.com

Dear Ms Somerset

Thank you for your email of 29 March 2010 to the Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, concerning logging in Mumbulla State Forest. I have been asked to respond on the Minister's behalf.

The Australian Government's primary role in protecting our environment is defined by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), which is Australia's national environmental law. This legislation provides for the protection of defined matters of national environmental significance (NES), including nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities, and listed migratory species, among others.

As you are aware, the logging activities fall within the area covered by the Eden Regional Forestry Agreement (RFA). Forestry operations undertaken in accordance with a RFA are specifically exempted from the application of the EPBC Act (unless Ramsar wetlands or properties of world heritage value are involved). In this particular case, the department could only intervene if forestry operations were not undertaken in accordance with the RFA, and there were actual or likely significant impacts on any matters of NES. The Eden RFA can be viewed on the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry web site at: (<http://www.daff.gov.au/rfa/regions/nsw-eden>).

You may be interested to learn that Australian Government's Threatened Species Scientific Committee, established under the EPBC Act, is currently assessing the status of koalas for possible listing as a nationally threatened species. The assessment is due for completion by 30 September 2010. The Australian Government is also helping to conserve koalas by implementing the new National Koala Conservation and Management Strategy 2009-2014. The strategy aims to conserve koalas throughout their natural range by implementing actions such as identifying, protecting and preserving important koala habitat, and addressing the impacts of disease on koalas.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Dylan Horne on (02) 6275 9100 if you need more information or wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Rose Webb  
Assistant Secretary  
Compliance and Enforcement Branch

14 April 2010



ENVIRONMENT AUSTRALIA



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, WATER, HERITAGE AND THE ARTS