

**LETTER: MINISTER TONY BURKE, MINISTER FOR SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT,
WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES, BRONTE SOMERSET, 22.08.2012**

Dear Minister Burke,

It was reassuring that you are sympathetic to the demise of, and that you are conscientiously approaching the problems associated with managing, existing koala populations.

Your comment re freefall in numbers unfortunately doesn't apply to the SE NSW koala population where the population has reached rock bottom. Unlike Queensland and Victoria, we don't have the luxury of a 100 or 500 sized population to manage!

They are in the middle of a conundrum, for us in the SE NSW, the disaster has passed. Our last 30 – 40 warriors are struggling on to their inevitable extinct status and are located amidst State Forest logging coups. These last warriors are a unique 'ancestral' genotype - the largest koalas on the planet and are thus especially precious.

The local conservationists and koala experts feel that we have been left an awful, and almost unmanageable, legacy and feel conscious that we shall leave an awful legacy for future generations if we do not support enactment of policies which would provide immediate protection of the remaining koalas in SE State Forests and into perpetuity.

We believe that, whilst protection zones are a step in the right direction, they prevent koalas from self-relocating to find mates and restrict migration to more suitable habitat in times of heat or drought or lack of food.

We know that logging and lack of due care has contributed to this end result of free fallen koala numbers - our koalas are beyond a ground zero. And it is not as if they have never lived here - they used to in thousands!

The program indicated the hypothesis that disease may be caused by stress-related loss of habitat - here in the SE NSW loss of habitat has contributed to the demise of koalas who have never been afforded the sort of protection which might reasonably give them a fighting chance.

Yours faithfully,
Bronte Somerset