

**Letter to Editors: The mystery of the missing koalas in our southern forests came to our attention with the [First koala spotted in 75 years in Kosciuszko National Park - ABC](#)**

14 December 2016

Once koalas thrived from the mountains to the southern coast until hunting, clearing, stress related diseases and logging decimated their numbers across this greatest continuous Eucalypt forest.

'Koalas need latitudinal and longitudinal habitat connectivity if populations are to recover and survive climate change' the late John Hibbard said as the then Head of SERCA as the 2008 Campaign: Natural Native Forests - essential for climate, water and wildlife was launched.

This campaign went worldwide with the community's effort to save the last southern koalas in the State Forests of Murrah, Mumbulla, Tathra, Tanja, Gulaga and Bermagui from woodchipping.

The recently declared Murrah Flora Park covers these forests, however the Park is an island and insufficient to guarantee long-term survival of this Vulnerable Australian icon.

Cultural burns and scientific evaluation are part of a government case study of the Murrah Flora Reserve, and critical to the Southern Koala Recovery Plan. Yet with a hot late summer predicted, one wildfire and back burning to save property could wipe the small but recovering far south coast population.

These now fire prone forests are thick with the silver top ash regrowth preferred for woodchips.

Forest restoration in all State Forests is critical for Koala survival and the safety of locals and the thousands of summer visitors.

A water crane permanently stationed in the Bega Valley is needed urgently.

And the Regional Forest Agreements must not be renewed!

Koalas face urban expansion on the north coast and prolonged heat waves out west - our vast southern forests stretching from the Great Eastern Ranges to the east coast can provide hope for the long-term survival of the Koala in New South Wales.

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