

Submission to Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act for listing Koalas as Vulnerable Prue Acton 16th June 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

The Koala should be listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. A 'conservation dependant' listing will not be adequate to protect this "icon" of Australia.

Species loss from human degradation of the environment is preventable.

Koalas are at the top of the species chain, equivalent to the orangutan of tropical forests in maintaining forest health.

Here on the southeast coast of NSW, at the base of the sacred Mumbulla Mountain, logging is taking place within meters of where 30-50 healthy, breeding koalas have been surveyed during the past 2 years; there may be as few as 200 left in the entire region. Logging is scheduled to log hundreds of hectares in the forests where koalas have been sighted.

Once these woodlands and forests "rained" down with koala pee. This animal is a vital part of the nutrient cycle of our forests and soils.

Clearing for agriculture, hunting for pelts and dog meat wiped out hundreds and hundreds of thousands last century.

Now logging, mainly for taxpayer subsidized woodchip logs (over 90%) will push koalas to regional extinction.

There is no provision for the habitat corridors for the expansion of this territorial animal and so importantly, for their survival in an ever changing climate.

Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) are excluded from the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act and this must be over turned.

Koalas cannot survive without habitat; the world is NOW acutely aware of the environmental impact of humans with the BP Gulf of Mexico tragedy. It is time to put biodiversity above human expansion and protect habitat as priority.

The Bega Valley Shire has recently been proclaimed as Australian Coastal Wilderness Landscape, in order to attract high value tourism to the world's most accessible temperate forests. Proper legislation could help protect and repopulate this beautiful region with that most desired of animal tourists wish to see, the koala.

Surely this is "the greatest moral challenge of our times", if the only place our grand children and tourists can see koalas and the other species found in their habitat zones, is a zoo.

Yours sincerely

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