



Australians for Animals

PROTECT • NURTURE • RESTORE

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A KOALA BATTLE CRY!

AFA has been working hard, pursuing multiple strategies to ensure NSW koalas get a break, a chance to survive into the future. Because right now, there's a tsunami of threats facing these precious critters, along with the greater glider and so many other forest dwelling wildlife.

Some of the reports coming in from forest activists are absolutely heartbreaking. Injured koalas, koalas fleeing from industrial bulldozers, forestry workers deliberately causing damage to habitat trees, breaches happening in plain sight.

Koalas In Care reported on shocking injuries and subsequent death of a koala near Dingo Tops forest.

The koala's injuries included bruising to the chin, scrotum, fractures to his radius and ulna, a ruptured liver, haemorrhage in his lungs. In another forest compartment, activists report watching a koala flee from the machinery.

Forest dwelling creatures are used to bird song, frog chirps, koala mating calls, the insect chorus. Instead these defenceless animals are subjected to terror as the noise of industrial machinery tearing down their habitat trees leave

them in a state of un-imaginable shock and trauma.

The Australia Institute has produced two brilliant documentaries on the disaster that native forest logging presents and the abject failure of the NSW government to declare and place a moratorium on the promised Great Koala National Park. In one scene, a koala with a joey on her back is running around the stumps of her food and shelter trees, stunned, confused – not knowing where to go as the once peaceful habitat is now a war zone. A deserted field, with only the stumps of koala trees adorning a forest graveyard.

Community outrage is widespread with many communities organising sit-ins and lockdowns to stop the Forestry Corporation from logging forests with koala and greater glider habitat. One group, with mostly older women, known as the Knitting Nanas in Coffs harbour are real heroes. Women in their elder years are chaining themselves to machinery, getting arrested,



Photo courtesy of TOPPA Koalas in Care Inc.

appearing in court to defend themselves and going back to demonstrate as soon as possible.

Coffs Harbour Nanas have been on one forest compartment site for over 65 days, determined to protect koalas and other forest creatures from forestry operations. Their distress at witnessing the destruction Forestry and the Minns' NSW government is approving, has made for a lot of depression, tears, and anger.

As the protests grow, the Minns' government, and Ministers for Environment and Resources continue to ignore public concern.

No more evident than in southwest Sydney where the mindless, shocking destruction of koala habitat is nothing short of criminal. Huge urbanisation projects are taking over precious habitat, driving koalas onto Appin Road with 34 koalas killed so far this year.

THINKING LATERALLY

Our co-ordinator lived next to the founder of Permaculture, Bill Mollison, for some years. Bill was a master at organising campaigns, using unexpected tactics that often worked.

He always taught that successful campaigns needed the broadest public support, that it was important to light many bonfires so that government's attempts to squash a campaign resulted in politicians having to deal with multiple issues, complaints, challenges.

Following Bill's teachings, AFA has been working a different campaign. For starters, every harvest plan approved for logging in NSW carries this sentence

'certifies that the timber is from a sustainably managed forests'. A curious endorsement given the extent of damage, destruction and biodiversity loss caused by the industrial logging operations.

An in-depth investigation by AFA found that the umbrella certifying body, Responsible Wood, is an Australian Security & Investment Commission (ASIC) listed not for profit company. All directors are involved in the timber industry, including a CMIEU National

Secretary of Manufacturing. This is the union responsible for forestry workers.

Evidence of the requirements of certification as *'coming from sustainably managed forests'* reveals Sustainable Tasmania is certified as is the NSW Forestry Corporation. It would be hard to think of two more destructive operators. Ask Bob Brown.

As our co-ordinator is an investigative journalist by profession, the evidence gathered demonstrated that the certification was, potentially, 'greenwashing'.

What does greenwashing mean? Greenwashing is the act of making false or misleading statements about the environmental benefits of a product or practice. ASIC



explains *"such behaviour is not only unethical, but it can also be unlawful as it can be used to deceive shareholders, consumers and the broader community"*.

Greenwashing attracts massive fines. AFA has submitted extensive evidence to ASIC and we await the outcome. ASIC will not provide any updates as investigations are confidential.

THE NEXT STEP

AFA has compiled an extensive list of grants for koala conservation made by the NSW, Queensland and Federal governments.

The amount of taxpayer dollars outlaid for strategies, research, disease, translocation, grants, plans, rehabilitation etc is staggering. Millions and millions of dollars. We had our accountant check the figures as it was hard to believe the totals.

What's even worse is that not one cent of this mountain of money has resulted in any improvement in koala populations.

Nor are any audits or accountability available. In fact, these lists demonstrate an appalling waste of taxpayer dollars with grants clearly

substituting for any habitat protection.

The only way koalas can survive is if their habitats are protected.

State and federal governments ignore the horrendous damage done by forestry and the ongoing local extinctions. Instead, some of the funds are invested in translocation, (a very bad idea as koalas are territorial and faithful to certain eucalypt species in their habitats), artificial eucalypt leaves !! and endless dollars for chlamydia vaccines, retroviruses.

Scientists with koala expertise have

well documented that the stress caused by habitat loss causes a breakdown of koalas' immune system, ensuring chlamydia and retroviruses are able to wreak havoc on stressed, traumatised koalas.

Protecting koala habitat should be the number one goal of ALL governments.

How wild koalas could possibly be 'rounded up' and vaccinated is an exercise in fantasy.

AFA has contacted the NSW Audit office, submitted the documentation and requested an audit of the millions and millions allocated by



Photo by Third Silence Nature Photography - <https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/62718767>,

government.

We spoke at length with the Deputy Auditor. Both the Federal auditor and Queensland audit office will receive relevant lists of the unaudited grants as well and a request to audit.

BUT WAIT... THERE'S MORE

AFA has written to every single NSW Labour politician in the upper and lower house of parliament to express the growing public concern over the continued logging of the proposed Great Koala national park.

The charity has also indicated how much anger there is over Labour's broken promise. Many voters supported Labour at the last state election because of their promise to create the park.

The Minns' government now says the park won't be designated until the last year of its term in office. By that time, the park will be unviable as so many compartments will have been logged. Although 106 koala hubs have been declared by government, they are meaningless as koalas need to disperse, they need connectivity, corridors and peaceful environments.

AFA will be writing to every single director and member of the Taronga Conservation Society, the Biodiversity Council, and many other scientific institutions requesting their support for the immediate establishment of the park and a moratorium on logging.



Image by <https://www.facebook.com/foresteologyalliance/>

AFA will leave **NO STONE UNTURNED** in our efforts to stop the koala slaughter. We will also use all our international contacts (including globally recognised scientists) to request their help in getting the NSW government to stop logging the proposed park and **MAKE THE PARK A REALITY.**

AND MORE...

One of the most important steps in any major campaign is to engage the broadest possible community. Politicians hate opposition coming from the general public. It can mean electoral defeat, just as promises can ensure victory.

NSW Labour government has broken its promise. Breaking promises results in the public losing trust in governments.

In this case, we will lose not only trust in government but also the Koala.

Please help AFA spread the word!

Sue is writing regular articles on the koala and native forests for Independent Australia, articles which are reaching a broad community.

FINALLY GOOD NEWS

AFA's efforts with the new legal team focused on an entirely different legal challenge are coming along well..

Good conference call with lawyer this week, definitely first steps. We'll keep you posted but no clues for the moment...

Please support our tireless efforts

with your kind donations which are so appreciated.

We are very short of funds.

For the Animals,

Sue Arnold & Friends



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