

Talking Points



Point 1: Koalas are at risk of extinction in NSW

- Almost every koala population in NSW is believed to be in decline. On the north coast, koala numbers are estimated to have fallen by as much as 50 per cent in just the last 20 years.
- During the recent mega fires, at least 350 koalas were estimated to have died on the NSW north coast alone, pushing NSW koalas even closer to extinction.
- The primary threat to koalas is habitat loss. Koala habitat (primarily eucalyptus woodlands and forests) continues to rapidly diminish, and unless it is protected, restored, and expanded we will see these iconic animals go extinct in our lifetime.

Point 2: Changes to land clearing legislation is destroying koala habitat and impacting koala wellbeing

- Recent changes to land clearing legislation make it easier to clear koala habitat on private land. This makes it more important than ever that koala habitat on public land is protected.
- In 2018 it was reported that following the changes to land clearing legislation, the rate of land either fully or partly cleared almost tripled to 8,194 hectares in a single year.
- Koalas are not only losing their homes but they are facing chronic stress, putting them at increased risk to infection, suppressed reproduction, growth and high mortality rates.
- In 2019 researchers found that land clearing was the biggest cause of stress to koalas, followed by bushfires - far outweighing the stress caused by vehicles, dog attacks and disease.

Point 3: Tree clearing is animal cruelty

- An estimated 5 to 10 million vertebrate animals are killed each year in NSW as trees are bulldozed - but currently these animal welfare impacts are almost completely ignored under current laws.
- As the trees koalas call their homes are bulldozed, these displaced animals are at risk of being killed outright or maimed from being crushed or falling to the ground. Those who escape are often hit by cars or attacked by dogs.
- If koalas manage to make it to remaining habitat, there is often no room for them as their habitat grows smaller and food sources disappear. This leaves many koalas to suffer and die due to overcrowding, deprivation, conflict, stress and disease.

Point 4: We need wildlife corridors and a Great Koala National Park

- The Great Koala National Park is the best chance for koalas to have a secure future in NSW.
- The proposed National Park will encompass 315,000 ha of public land in the Coffs Harbour region which includes two nationally recognised koala populations, estimated to contain almost 20% (about 4,500) of NSW's remaining wild koalas.
- Wildlife corridors must be included as part of this plan to allow koalas to move between their remaining habitat.

Point 5: We need urgent climate action to protect koala habitat

- Koala populations in NSW are affected by climate extremes such as severe droughts, heatwaves and as we have recently seen mega fires - all caused by climate change.
- With koala populations being decimated by extreme weather conditions, our State Government needs to take urgent, decisive action to combat climate change.
- Reducing emissions by supporting renewable energy, fining corporations who emit high levels of pollution, investing in repatriation of our native forests must be supported by our Government.