

My Name is Dr. Ronald Loughland, I am an international wildlife ecologist and researcher and I am based out of Huntingdon NSW 2446.

Important Habitat in Port Macquarie:- The Lake Innes Peninsular adjacent Port Macquarie has some of the most important koala habitat in NSW. Ecological surveys suggest that around 700 koala live on around 600 ha of prime koala coastal forest. The land is privately owned and the owners are determined to have the land developed. The land was historically zoned residential and rural residential. As such, under private land forestry agreements existing in NSW, the owners are cutting out all the most important habitat trees for Koala and other species such as forest owls and spotted tailed quoll. This logging is occurring legally although it clearly contradicts all logic with regards to biodiversity protection and particularly the conservation of key koala habitat. The owners are also pursuing a development application for residential development with Council.

Recommendations:-

- 1.** I suggest that a moratorium on logging at the Lake Innes site be immediately enacted by the NSW Government and that the former zoning and current process for DA be revoked based on current scientific data indicating the outstanding biodiversity importance of the site.
- 2.** I suggest that Port Macquarie Council be assisted to acquire the Lake Innes land and dedicate it with the State Government as key koala conservation habitat.
- 3.** I suggest that remnant private forest habitat in the Port Macquarie area be immediately protected from private logging (as currently permitted by NSW Government under private landholder agreements), and that private lands and NSW State Forest areas in our region be actively managed for Koala and other arboreal mammal and bird populations, including the retention of existing habitat corridors between State Forest, National Parks and private forested lands.
- 4.** I recommend the urgent development of suitable forest corridors in our region between islands of forest habitat using State or Local Government land or through agreements and partnerships with local private landholders. I recommend that this initiative be pursued using local communities undertaking large scale habitat planting programs. This includes the protection, enhancement and maintenance of remnant roadside vegetation which in some areas is now the only continuous corridor of vegetation between larger forest remnants.
- 5.** I would be more than happy to assist develop, plan and implement broad scale community habitat corridor restoration programs in the Port Macquarie region, as that is what I am currently doing abroad for foreign Governments (e.g. I am leading a 2 million tree restoration program in Saudi Arabia).
- 6.** I suggest that Port Macquarie Council adopt the Koala as part of their overall Corporate regional Identity, and put the region on the map as the Koala capital of NSW, This would help raise awareness about the decline of koala, assist with habitat protection and rehabilitation and expansion in the area and bring in valuable eco-tourism revenue for the region.
- 7.** Port Macquarie is unique in that it has urban Koala populations (thanks to Lake Innes Peninsular) and also is home to the outstanding Koala Hospital, that is a unique facility, offering visitors an educational close up experience with Koala. The hospital is in urgent need of financial assistance (it functions on donations) to continue their excellent volunteer work and I recommend that funding be allocated to them as part of the NSW Koala conservation strategy.